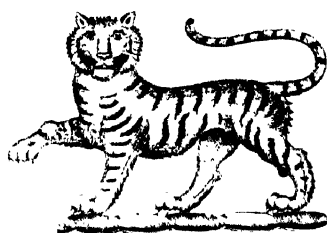


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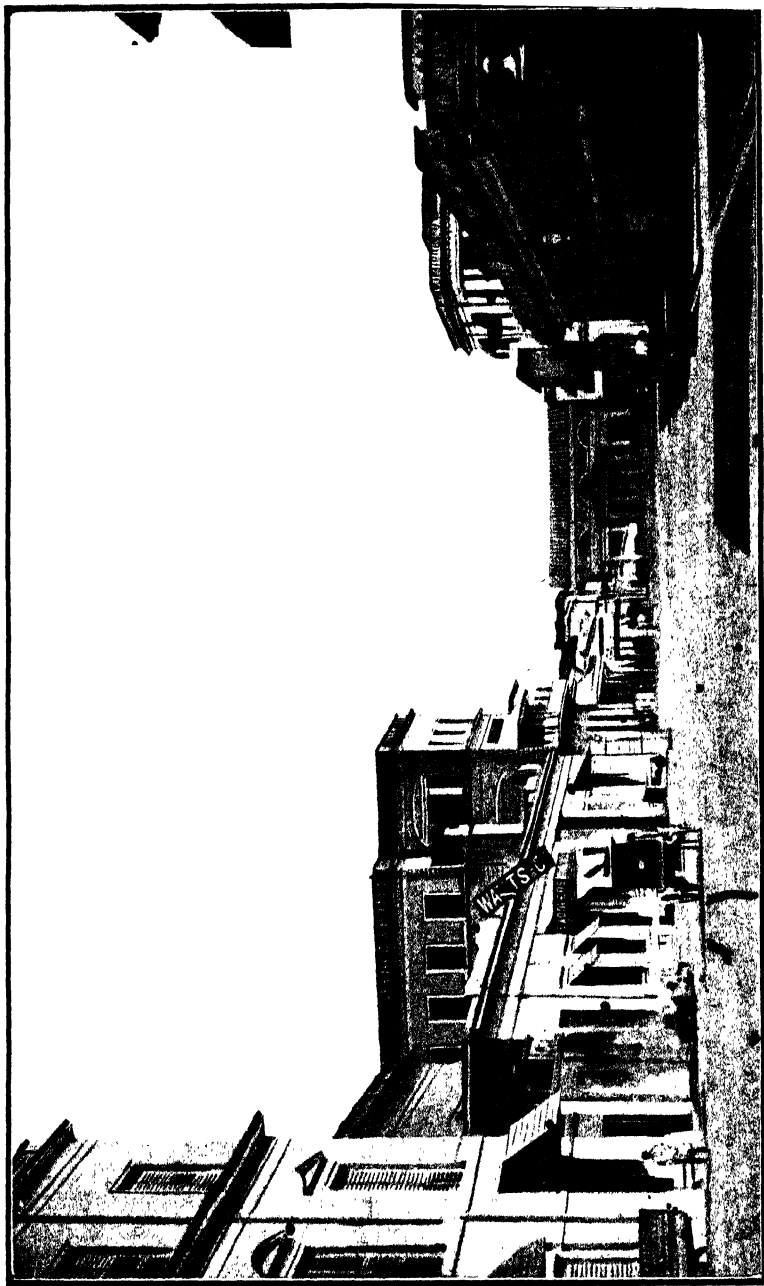
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SPENCE'S HOTEL, CALCUTTA \* 249

# JOHN BARLEYCORN BAHADUR

OLD TIME TAVERNS IN INDIA

BY  
MAJOR H. HOBBS, V.D.

CALCUTTA  
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1944.

*BY THE SAME AUTHOR :*

"THE PIANO IN INDIA."

"IT WAS LIKE THIS."

"DIGRESSIONS OF A DITCHER."

"INDIAN DUST DEVILS."

"ROMANCE OF THE CALCUTTA SWEEP "

"SCOUNDRELS AND SCROUNGERS."

"SPENCE'S HOTEL AND ITS TIMES."

"TALKEETALKEEWALLAHS AND OTHERS."

"ANY SOLDIER TO HIS SON."

"THE GLORY HOLE."

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THE AUTHOR IN HIS EIGHTIETH YEAR AND THE  
SIXTY-FIRST YEAR OF HIS CAREER IN INDIA

## INTRODUCTION

John Barleycorn Bahadur is the Indian story of Taverns, a word taken from the Latin 'Taverna' a hut or booth, which, as years went by became almost synonymous with 'hotel'. From what one reads about the early days of the British in India, 'Taverna' seems an appropriate description of those hostelries which did so little for those described by Richard Hukluyt as 'paynfull and personall travellers' who, more or less friendless, had through necessity to stay somewhere regardless of comfort or refinement.

Writers about India, and there are many, express gratitude to those who helped in finding or arranging the matter contained in their books. In *John Barleycorn Bahadur* all the research work, taken from easily accessible books has been done by myself. In India since 1883, blessed with those many years in which to collect stray details of British-Indian social life, writing, with me, has grown from a pastime into this book, in confident hope that some readers will find pages that are entertaining, and others may learn a few lessons.

Most of those whose names are mentioned in the chapters bearing on the last sixty years were personally known to me. They took life as they found it, 'sufficient for the day is the enjoyment thereof' being their motto, and moved about the

country leaving little to record, but forming a numerous body of the non-official European population.

The title is taken from (Sir) John Barleycorn, a song from the *English Dancing Master* (1651) who was malt liquor personified. His neighbours vowed that Sir John should die, so they hired ruffians to 'plough him with ploughs and bury him,' this they did and afterwards 'combed him with harrows and thrust clods on his head,' but did not kill him. Then with hooks and sickles they 'cut his legs off at the knees,' bound him like a thief, and left him 'to wither with the wind' and he died not. They now 'rent him to the heart,' and having 'mowed him in a mow' sent bravos to beat him with clubs, and they beat him so sore that 'all the flesh fell from his bones,' but yet he died not. To a kiln they next hauled him, and burnt him like a martyr, but he survived the burning. They crushed him between two stones, but killed him not. Sir John bore no malice for his ill usage, but did his best to cheer the flagging spirits even of his worst persecutors."

Barley, the source of malt liquor and whisky takes a prominent place in British-Indian history. How many difficulties have been smoothed over by a friendly drink will never be known, nor can it be estimated how much comfort it has given to those depressed by loneliness and over-work in a bad climate. To the agreeableness of life it has played its part in getting at that truth which is stranger than fiction (to most people), is sometimes found at the bottom of a bottle, and has cured more evils than it created.

The demand for this book has led me to revise and add to what has already appeared. There is additional matter about the Hookah, the Adjutant, Dak Bungalows, Boarding Houses, and Clubs. An Index makes the Second Edition more complete as an historical work.

21, Old Court House Street,  
Calcutta,  
*November 25, 1943.*

H. HOBBS.



# JOHN BARLEYCORN BAHADUR

## OLD-TIME TAVERNS IN INDIA.

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### INTRODUCTION

“Whoe’er has travelled life’s dull round,  
Where’er his stages may have been,  
May sigh to think he still has found  
The warmest welcome at an inn.”

*William Shenstone.*

“I would not labour, I, nor sing,  
Advertisement’s vain tide to swell ;  
‘But he hath found a goodly thing  
Who finds a comfortable hotel.

Here guests are free to come and go,  
To lounge, or laugh, to work or play ;  
To eat and drink, or fast—and lo !  
The night is even as the day.”

In the early days a journey to India was an arduous undertaking. Gemelli Careri an Italian who came in 1692 mentions four ways of getting there, the best in his opinion being across Asia Minor and Persia. The sea route he condemned as there “was much danger to life or at least to health in the midst of these horrible tempests and tedious calms, which keep the spirit in continual alarm, while the body is entirely fed on spoiled food, and one drinks no water which is not faint and full of worms.”

Rough as the journey may have been, travellers did not always find trouble at an end when they reached their destination. The voyage was not the worst part of the journey and many harassed souls must have been in full accord with the Hindu philosopher who declared travel to be a foretaste of hell.

Where to stay on arrival at an Indian port must have been an anxious problem to most travellers owing to the "absence of inns for the convenience of travellers." Apparently there were places where strangers were given shelter and treated on equality with Indian people. Herbert writing of his day (1627) states: "At Band Alley we found a neat caravanseraw built by men's charity to give all civil passengers a resting place *gratis*; to keep them from the injury of thieves, beasts, weather etc."

*The Arch. Survey of India*, VOL. XXXVII, states that in the middle of the 17th century, "the rest-houses (at Bijapur) for the free accommodation of travellers, (were) so luxuriously appointed that men said of them 'to rest therein was for the weary to taste the medicine of felicity.'"

Although da Silveira in 1529 christened Bombay "The Island of Good Life" because his sailors enjoyed rest and refreshment there, the unhealthiness was proverbial. Fryer termed it a charnel-house. The swamps left by the sea at low tide must have been as bad for health as the intemperance of the Europeans themselves. In addition there was the "stinking of the Fish which was used to be applied to the Roots of the trees

instead of Dung" making Bombay even worse than Coleridge's opinion of Cologne.

"In Koln, a town of monks and bones,  
And pavements fanged with murderous  
stones,  
And rags, and hags and hideous wenches ;  
I counted two and seventy stenchcs."

John Ovington in *A Voyage to Surat in the Year 1689*, states that he arrived at Bombay at the beginning of the Monsoon ; "September and October, those two months which immediately follow the Rains, are very pernicious to the Health of Europeans ; in which two Moons more of them die than generally in all the year besides....." "And the unhealthfulness of the water bears a just proportion to the scarcity and meanness of the Diet and both of them together with a bad Air, make a sudden end of many a poor Sailer and Souldier, who pay their lives for hopes of a livelihood."

Ovington states that of 24 passengers who arrived with him at Bombay at the commencement of the rains, twenty, and fifteen of the ship's company perished before the rains had ceased.

Old writers have said that the Portuguese, when they settled anywhere, began by building a church ; the Dutch by building a fort, and the English by building a tavern. In Cochin some years ago, the progress of deterioration was still in evidence. The old Cathedral erected to the glory of God by Albuquerque, or Vasca da Gama, was turned into a fort by the Dutch, and later,



a British public house was superimposed on both.

The Church and the tavern were long connected in England. Beer and the Bible have won more elections than any other combination and it might be brought to memory that it was not until 1827 that a license was withdrawn from a church-tavern in Deepdale, a village between Derby and Nottingham, which had a door between the altar and the tap room.

Daniel Defoe was struck by that for he wrote:—

“Wherever God erects a House of Prayer,  
The Devil always builds a Chapell there,  
And 'twill be found upon examination  
The latter has the largest congregation.”

It was a rough world. Edward Terry tells us that “it was usual then for parents or guardians to send unruly spirits out to India, that they might make their graves in the sea or on the Indian shore.” This he calls a very cleanly conveyance to be rid of their unruly children.

Charles Raikes who wrote *The Englishman in India* adds to that:—“It was usual to send out several criminals, sentenced to death in England and respited, to be turned loose on any newly discovered shore by our early mariners. A batch of these Newgate birds, as they were called, generally went out with each Indian fleet.” From that it is plain that our forefathers knew that it is not possible to take the kink out of a dog's tail; conditions were against reformation so that was not sentimentally considered.

The chaplains of those days were well-known figures, some of whom "did not lead very edifying lives." There are black sheep in every flock and in a letter dated November 16, 1700, we find a complaint that:

"Your Honour's Chaplaine put on board the *De Grave* and approved by the Bishop of London as hee saith and whom hee esteems his great friend and patron and very good Lord, runn away here from and left the Ship and is entered upon the Enemies Camp and there remains. Wee understand hee is a very lewd drunken swearing person drencht in all manner of debaucheries and a most bitter enemy to King William and the present Government, and since he did runn away wee are pleased hee hath taken his quarters with them that he may not influence any of your servants with his emoralities or doctrines, one whereof is that he is exempt from Secular Power..... Wee pray your Honour some effectual course may be taken for the preventing these and the like in famous scandalls to our Nation and Religion, and that these parts be not stockt with such persons."

He may have been related many times removed, to a cabin mate of mine who on the homeward voyage refused to admit that he was a missionary but went so far as to say he had a job as one. At Port Said he went ashore, where, apparently thirsting after righteousness, he found converts difficult to bag for he came on board at about 2 a.m. garbed in one sock and a pair of black eyes.

That breed still survives. An Indian paper

contained the following:—"A new saint has appeared ; his eloquence and holiness have emptied many villages. The police are on his track."

There is a story of a hard case whom the Salvation Army "saved". However useful the convert may have been in adding to the records of the Old Bailey, he wasn't much of a star turn at a prayer meeting but he had to testify to the delights of a new life. Led to the edge of the platform he told the audience—"Yuss! I've served the devil for nineteen years, I 'ave!" when a voice from the gentleman in khaki at the back of the hall shouted—"Then why not stick it for another two year and git yer pension?"

Mackrabie, Francis' brother-in-law has left on record an unflattering opinion of the clerics. Writing early in 1775 he states:—They are not numerous, but thoroughly unorthodox. One rivals Nimrod in hunting, a second supplies bullocks for the Army, another is a perfect connoisseur in Chinese gardening. I endeavoured to obtain some light from them all. But the fear of God is not the kind of wisdom most in request in Bengal." But the object of the Church of England is to place an educated gentleman in every parish in the kingdom and it is unfair to judge by the failures.

New arrivals had to keep their eyes skinned wherever they went. It may be hardly fair to 'debunk' the reputation of oldtimers but it is worth while for everybody to bring some facts back to memory just as it is wise to forget many of the others. Men of high character were as uncommon as snub noses in Jerusalem. One often

hears of the milk of human kindness but the cow didn't live in India.

Clive's opinion of the English officials who bolted from Suraja Doula's troops in 1756 (the time of the Black Hole tragedy) is still on record. He wrote privately to the Governor of Madras and advised him not to believe a word they might say "for they are bad subjects, and rotten at heart, and their conduct finds no excuse, even among themselves." What is worse, the present war has various unpleasant happenings of a similar nature.

Clive, Sumner, and Verelst, appointed Commissioners of Inquiry in the conduct of civilian administrators, reported to the Court in 1765 as follows:—"Referring to their conduct, their transactions seem to demonstrate that every spring of the Government was tainted with corruption; that principles of rapacity and oppression universally prevailed, and that every spark and sentiment of public spirit was lost and extinguished in the abandoned lust of universal wealth."

Honesty as a cult in the administration of India is of fairly recent origin. Old-timers, official, commercial and clerical had no use for it. Their bump of acquisitiveness was situated in the palms of their hands.

In those early turbulent days India swarmed with unrepentant sinners who had discarded their Bibles and their consciences at the Cape of Good Hope and thought it too much trouble to bother about picking them up on the return journey twenty-five years later. As barely one in five ever came back, well, perhaps that didn't matter

very much. If they did not deliberately set out to each Hell, they made a deplorable mess of finding the road to Heaven. There are a thousand ways of being bad and only one of being good, so they had excuses.

*Qui Hi* quotes an Indian servant who obviously knew what he was talking about. "O master very fine gentleman! same as Christian man; make fight business: all very well: but master never say prayer: every gentleman make too much curse and get drunk: your God tell you do that: black fellow never drink any: more money to master." When one considers the foul water they had to drink both on the voyage and when in India, there were excuses for intemperance.

In the *Good Old Days of the Honorable John Company*, W. H. Carey states that in 1780 "Drunkenness, gambling, and profane swearing were universally practised." Complaints in public journals testified that all classes of Europeans made Christmas festivities a "plea for absolute drunkenness and obscenity of conversation, that is while they were able to articulate at all."

Teetotallers dislike being told that the motor car has done more harm to humanity than drink ever did. It takes fifteen years of pretty hard drinking to kill a man during which time his family recognizes him as one not worth bothering about. The motor car brings about more misery and ruin in a few seconds.

The gravest danger to the community is the number of cripples. Dr. Johnson said that a

sick man is a scoundrel. It is more true to say that a crippled man is a criminal. Men who have been deprived of the ability to earn a living, or have an adored child maimed for life, and have been juggled out of monetary compensation by a rascally lawyer, cannot be expected to look upon the sunny side of life. Every change brings its evils, and as a curse to millions, drink takes a place a long way second to the automobile. One evil succeeds another.

Apparently the English in the East were not the only pebbles on the beach. A writer in the *Calcutta Review* (Vol. xxxv) commenting upon European mercantile morality, cites a Dutch authority, Mossel, who exposed some facts about the Dutch East India Company:—"For a series of years they have been *guilty* of the greatest enormities, and the foulest dishonesty. They have looked upon the Company's effects confided to them as booty thrown open to their depredations; they have most shamefully and arbitrarily falsified the invoice prices."

Our songwriter, Sir Henry Bishop, in a tuneful glee had something to say about the Dutch:—

"Mynheer Vandunk, though he never was  
drunk,  
Sipp'd his brandy and water gaily;  
And he quench'd his thirst with two quarts  
of the first  
To a pint of the latter daily."

As the rise of the British in India is said to have been partly due to their honesty in fulfilling

obligations whereby they showed up in great contrast to the French who had none at all, one can form some idea of the standard set up in those bad old days.

Many complaints were made about the absence of taverns where strangers could find accommodation, yet there seemed to be a lot of them. Only occasionally does one come across the names of taverns which were considered to have any claim to respectability ; to be seen in others was enough to brand a newcomer as an associate of scoundrels.

The Honorable East India Company undoubtedly did all that was possible to keep their servants on the straight and narrow road and were occasionally successful. Ovington, quotes a resolution of the Company : —

“That the Agents and Chiefs, in their several factories take care to prevent all profane swearing and taking the Name of God in vain by cursed oaths ; all drunkenness and intemperance, all fornication and uncleanness ; and that if any will not be reformed, and do not abstain from these vices, but after admonition and reprehension shall be found guilty again, that then such punishment shall be inflicted on them, consisting with the laws of God and this Kingdom, as the Agent and Council shall find their crime deserve. And that if after such punishment inflicted, he or they will not amend or reform, then the Agent is strictly enjoined and required to send home for England by the next ships such person or persons so unreclaimable, that they may not remain in India, to the dishonour

of God, the scandal of religion, the discredit of our Nation, and the perverting of others."

For the same purpose, the factory library was stocked with all manner of improving books, but right from the Creation the first human beings who knew anything about rules broke them and so that will be until the end of the world.

One must, after all, consider the mentality of the day. In 1665 "Two senior Captains of the Presidency had, by orders of the Council, drawn up an estimate of the extra ordinary monthly expenses as they considered necessary on field service ; the list of these is curious and includes the following items :—

Madeira	30 bottles	at Rs. 1/8 each	Rs. 45
Beer	30 bottles	-/12/- "	" 22- 8
Airack	15 bottles	-/4/- "	" 3-12

---

Rs. 71- 4

The above monthly allowance is headed as "Necessary for a Captain on a Campaign." Well, there are still among us stout-hearted fellows who could beat that in a week.

An effort was made, with little success, to check the mortality brought about by heavy drinking, by encouraging the use of tea. John Albert de Mandelslo, a young German nobleman, landed at Surat on April 25, 1638 and published his experiences in 1646. "At our ordinary meetings every day we took only 'Thé' which is commonly used all over the Indies, not only among those of the country, but also among the Dutch and English."



Ovington, who came later, found that with the Dutch "the teapot's seldom off the fire," but apparently the English preferred "burnt wine, punch and arrack." He waxes eloquent on the medicinal properties of tea. "With some hot spices intermixt and boiled in the water," he says, "tea has the repute of prevailing against the headache, gravel, and griping in the guts, and 'tis generally drunk in India, either with sugar-candy, or by the more curious, with small conserved lemons. The frequent use of this innocent tea, and the perpetual perspiration which is caused by the heat which is augmented by this liquor, are the reason why the gout and stone, agues, rheumatisms and catarrhs are rarely heard of in these parts." He might also have added coughs to his list of ailments which among Europeans are comparatively rare in India.

Tea did not reach England till 1660; on September 25 Pepys "did send for a cup of tea (a China drinke)". A duty of 8d. a gallon was imposed on it. In 1664 two pounds were sent to Charles II at the cost of £4-6-0d. Two years later 22½ pounds were shipped. This was after the Company had started the China trade.

\*"Burnt wine" or brandy, was looked upon as 'a water of immortality'; it prolongs life, clears away ill-humours, revives the heart, and maintains youth."

In 1525 Jerome Braunscheig's *Vertuose Booke* of Distyllacyon for the help and profit of surgeons physicians, pothecearies and all manner of people was translated and published in London. "Aqua Vita" we read "is commonly called the mistress of all medicines, for it easeth the diseases coming from cold. It giveth also young courage in a person, and causeth him to have good memory and remembrance. It purifyeth the five wits of melancholy and of all uncleanness when it is drunk by reason and measure, five or six drops in the morning, in a spoonful of wine."

Another writer expressed himself even more bluntly about those days of ruin and sudden death.

“Besides a universal capacity there was a prevalent and odious looseness of manner among those desperate adventurers who ‘whistled down the wind to prey on fortune’ and whom England, in the emphatic language of the Scriptures had ‘spued out’; men who sought those golden sands of the East to repair their broken fortunes; to bury in oblivion a sullied name or to wring, with lawless hand, from the weak and unsuspecting, wealth which they had not the courage or the capacity to obtain by honest industry at home. They cheated, they gambled, they drank; they revelled in all kinds of debauchery; though associated in vice linked together by a common bond of capacity, they often pursued one another with desperate malice, and, few though they were in numbers, among them there was no unity, except a unity of crime. The fullest scope was given for the misconduct of such persons by the corporate immorality of the early companies.” After that we may suppose what a paradise for scoundrels the country must have been when the Abbé Raynal considered the “English to be the best of the Europeans in India”. And it may be that they were but little worse than those they left behind them but in most European countries, criminals generally died of old age.

No wonder they astonished and shocked the unsophisticated Indians who, at any rate, have good manners. Not but that India could

produce as many, and more coldblooded scoundrels who were worse than the Europeans. Government certainly made occasional efforts at control and punished offenders with extreme severity when they could get hold of them ; but *when every man was out for his own hand*, few troubled about the extortions and exactions of tavern keepers. They were not all saints who came for board and lodging either, so it is natural that a succession of scoundrels would harden any heart. Perhaps the best that can be said about "Mine Host" of those days was, where interest in strangers was concerned, it was a tussle between the two as to who could get in first.

Apparently, so far as taverns went, the same story could be told about all three Presidencies. As the Irishman put it—they were all as bad 'as one another and worse. Philip Anderson, in his book on Bombay states:—"Possibly it may occur to the reader, as it has occurred to the writer, that the *dramatis personae*.....are all men of bad character ; that I represent offensive details which are relieved by no examples of goodness and honour. I can only say that I represent the 'matter faithfully as recorded by the best authorities of the age. Vices were then trifles ; to be corrupt and to corrupt others was the fashion. I do not find anything good in the local annals either written or printed. As soon as I do, it will be a pleasure to serve up what must be more agreeable to 'the gentle reader' than deprecatory strictures. In the meanwhile it is not my fault if nausea is

created by a surfeit of disgraceful anecdotes".  
p. 158.

There were others. One anecdote affords us some idea of the local Government at Ahmedabad during the middle of the XVIIth century. When the traveller, John Mandelslo was there, he was invited, together with the English and Dutch Factors, by the Governor to a native entertainment. As is usual on such occasions dancing girls exhibited their performances. One troupe having become fatigued, another was sent for. The latter however, having been ill requited on a former occasion, refused to attend. What measure did the Governor adopt? A very summary one indeed. He had them dragged into his presence, and then after taunting them for their scruples ordered them to be beheaded. These reluctant ministers of a despot's pleasure pleaded for mercy with heartrending cries and shrieks. Their appeal was in vain, and eight wretched women were actually executed before the company. The English factors were horror-struck; but the Governor, (an early Hitler) merely laughed and asked why they were troubled. "Assure yourselves, gentlemen," he explained, "that if I did not take that course, I should not long be Governor of Ahmedabad."

"This account, given by an eye-witness whose veracity has been ordinarily admitted, is in itself a commentary upon the records of Native rule."—*The English in Western India*. Philip Anderson, A.M.

"There is no country in the world where the unfortunate meet with less pity than with us."

That was truthfully said by an Indian speaker at the World Congress of Faiths held in London in 1936.

Sir Charles Petrie, in his book, the *Four Georges*, tells us how things were in England during the early part of the 18th Century.

"The inns, for example, had not yet begun to change their character. There were no bars, no set dinners, and no dining rooms, for these innovations did not come in until the reign of George II. Travellers of any social distinction ordered what they liked, or, rather, what the house could supply, in their own rooms.....No charge was made for the use of the room, as the landlord reckoned to recoup himself out of the food and drink consumed, and the stabling. Poorer people, such as those who travelled in the carrier's wagon, gravitated to the kitchen."

If strangers made that a practice on arrival in India the kitchen accommodation would have startled them out of their wits. Perhaps the difference between the two countries was not very great; even to-day, in many European houses, the kitchen is a centre of household neglect often too repellant for the Memsahib to visit.

Samuel Pepys relates how he, his wife, and their friends laughed when they found themselves lousy after staying a night in an inn near London. Modern people would need something funnier than that before being amused. If those times were strange, they were also tolerant. They certainly would not have fared worse in India.

While in those early days India was a sunny

land for shady people, there were honest men among the English and credit must be given to the Honourable East India Company for being animated solely with a desire for peaceful trading. History tells us that the English, by their efforts to cope with lawlessness, gained the confidence of Indian leaders who often advanced large sums of money knowing they would be honorably repaid.

The causes of the success of the English have thus been described by Sir William Hunter:—

“England emerged the prize-winner from the long contest of the European nations for India. Her success was partly the good gift of fortune, but chiefly the result of four elements in the national character. There was—first, a marvellous patience and self-restraint in refusing to enter on territorial conquests or projects of Indian aggrandizement, until she had gathered strength enough to succeed. Second, an indomitable persistence in those projects once they were entered on, and a total incapacity on the part of her servants in India of being stopped by defeat. Third, an admirable mutual confidence of the Company’s servants in each other in times of trouble. Fourth, and chief of all, the resolute support of the English nation at home. England has never doubted that she must retrieve, at whatever strain to herself every disaster which may befall Englishmen in India; and she has never sacrificed the work of her Indian servants to the exigences of her diplomacy in Europe. She was the only European power which con-

sciously, but absolutely, carried out these two principles of policy. The result of that policy, pursued during two and a half centuries, is the British India of today.”—*Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. VI.

That was written many years ago. Since then the British in India, imbued with greed and fear have been afraid to open their mouths in case they were out of pocket by it. During the Gandhi rioting in 1921, a Bombay writer whose courage fell short of publishing his name in spite of telling the truth gave some of his fellow-countrymen a testimonial in:—“The British merchant in Bombay had his tail well tucked in under his whisky-filled belly, and added to his prestige by wearing a Gandhi cap.”

Right on from then the British, so long as they could make money—honestly if possible (although that didn’t concern many of them) but—make it were ready to eat dirt out of the left hands of the enemies of their country. The best friends of the Bosche in the present War were the merchants who stopped hundreds of our men from joining the army, even youngsters with a few months’ service in the country, so that they could make money. Those who might have wished to speak out knew that if they did they would not only lose their job but would never get another one in India. Nobody dared to express patriotic opinions, the only man who did during the better part of forty years was myself and I certainly made full use of the marvellous efficacy of blunt speech. The people in England, suffering from sloppy sentimentalism and regard

for opinions of others even more feeble-minded than themselves, have allowed matters to drift towards chaos. When men cease to remember their own courage, their prestige is indeed deplorable. A lot of this has been helped by some over-remunerated Members of Parliament doing their damndest to hamper, dishearten and disgust conscientious officials striving to do their best for India and Indians, who, according to Indian boasts, can be bribed with a few pounds to ask nasty questions in the House. What a shame it all is!

Some twenty years ago a Bengali editor denounced me until he foamed at the mouth. He wasn't quite so aggressive as one of his countrymen who shouted—"The rich man welters on crimson velvet while the poor man snorts on flints"—but he really let himself go all out. Two days later he called to ask my help in getting his son a job. Rather surprised I asked—"After calling me a tyrannical, stony-hearted, bloated capitalist, who crushed the life blood out of the souls of poor Indians, you now want my help?"

"Oh that!" he said, airily in real babu intonation—"That was only public speaking!" But that "public speaking" has done more than enough to drive all semblance of pluck or patriotism out of the hearts of our merchant princes.

During 59 years I haven't heard a patriotic remark made in public by any British business man in India, neither have I heard even one effective speech. Politically the Indian is garrulous and vindictive—but the Briton has been so



frightened by "public speaking" that he has been afraid to open his mouth.

The sensible Indian who knew what a babu raj means, looked in vain for some support from the non-official British. The result has been that the men who would have done much, to steady Indian opinion were not only left in the lurch but driven into the opposite camp.

Ernest Day, an Englishman, walking to work, was murdered while looking in a shop window. The European Association, which is the political organ of the Chamber of Commerce, held a meeting to denounce this outrage. As I was walking in, Colonel Crawford, Secretary, implored me not to say anything. "But you have asked people to come here to denounce that crime. Now you don't want to say anything about it?" He metaphorically went on his knees to stop me from uttering anything likely to upset the feelings of those who had instigated the murder.

All one could gather from what was said by four or five speakers was that people were urged to join the European Association, "It's your money we want," was as far as their courage took them. Lambs would have shewn more spirit. Telling them that aroused no resentment among the warrior caste of the Second City in the Empire!!! But when one learns that the funds for the Bengal revolutionaries' propaganda were provided by the British Mercantile Community (vide *Statesman* August 16th 1939) it is easy to understand that when money was about our political leaders' grovelled for it. With an entire

absence of pluck it is a compliment to them to say that the Babes in the Wood were prodigies of analysis and wizards of cunning compared with our political leaders. How they will show up when British troops are withdrawn from India and the cult of persecution of Britons in lonely places can be carried out with impunity ought to make them begin to think. Commercialism and the greed for money have debased British character in the East. Our countrymen have not been able to see farther than their pockets. The tragedy of it!

Perhaps, after all, as W. S. Landor put it: "We must not indulge in unfavourable views of mankind, since by doing it we make bad men believe they are no worse than others, and we teach the good that they are good in vain."

## THE LADIES

Having given some idea of what the men were like it is only fair to see what was written about the women. Apparently, the first women passengers numbered three ; two ladies, and a lady's maid who started before the flag dropped, got into trouble and was married at Cape Town "under a tree," which was not one bearing apples. The baby was born at Surat and was the first English child born in India. That was in 1616. Many a love story has been ruined by the advent of a baby. That one turned out all right.

The next reference takes us to 1652 when Captain Jeremy Blackman was permitted, as a special favor, to take his wife with him. A little later more must have come out, and those that did "their carriage was made private by *Chicks*, or blinds of split bamboo, and provided with an escort which seemed, in their picturesque garb," says Fryer, to be "such a troop as went to apprehend Our Saviour, after the manner we find them on old landskips, and led by the same phanatik lights we see there painted."

A sad story is told of "John Leachland having for some time passed years privately kept a woman of the country and by her had a child .....and notwithstanding the many persuasions of the President and Council to divert him from that course of life, standeth so firmly resolute not to leave her, as that he desireth rather to be suspended the Company's service."

He was reported Home and cashiered but continued at Surat with his native wife content

to live and multiply on sunshine and bananas until he died in 1630, five years after being dismissed. Obviously an honorable man he was one who believed that even a fallen angel could give birth to heavenly twins.

Strict orders were given prohibiting Englishmen from forming liaisons with native women, and promotion was stopped among those who broke the rule. "Sailors or soldiers of no higher quality than sergeant, may be permitted if your Honour shall think fit as it amounge the Dutch, tho' among the Danes it is otherwise, they being supplied with Europe women." Mixed marriages turn out happily enough ; the wife is not always keen to get away for months or years at a time to another part of world. The tragedy is, that there is a sting, the more painful for its injustice, on children of mixed parentage. Much of that will be removed by this war as large numbers of lads born and bred in India have shewn themselves to be brave and resourceful soldiers.

Most writers on the Anglo-Indian problem appear to have missed a Company's order dated 1692.

"Encourage by all means that you can invent that our Soldiers do marry with the Native women, because it is impossible to get ordinary young women, as we have before directed, to pay their own passages, altho Gentle-women sufficient do offer themselves."

Sir John Child who was Governor of Bombay from about 1682 was a pretty poisonous sample of an Englishman of the Good Old Days. Had the Company raked the world with

a fine tooth comb a worse one could not be found. He didn't care whose money he took as long as he didn't take any of his own. He was a bad servant and a worse master.

Captain Hamilton says this about him:—  
“Notwithstanding the Company was at so much charge in building of Forts, they had no thoughts of building a Church, for many Years after Sir George Oxendon began to build one, and charitable Collections were gathered for the Use ; but when Sir George died, Piety grew sick, and the Building of Churches was grown unfashionable.

“There were reckoned above 5000£ had been gathered towards building the Church, but Sir John Child, when he came to Bombay, converted the Money to his own Use, and never more was heard of it.” To trust such a man with public money was on a par with tying up a bloodhound with a string of sausages.

Child was apparently a man who would have put any blood-thirsty pirate to shame. He appointed Ward, his brother-in-law his Deputy, and between them they not only sharked the military to such a degree that they revolted, but Ward also tried to sell the Island of Bombay to Sivaji. Child reported the mutiny to London ; a frigate was sent to restore order, and free pardon to those who had offended, together with a “Passage on board the Company's shipping.”

A Captain Thorburn had been one of the mutineers ; being a married man with a family on the Island, and owning a small estate he had no desire to go to England, and trusted to the Act of Grace to carry on in safety.

Child getting back to power made Thorburn feel the "Weight of his Displeasure. He got some Fellows to swear him out of his little Estate, who brought in forged Bonds for Sums borrowed from one King, whom he never had any dealings with, and found witnesses to attest them. All that Thorburn had was too little to pay the Sums, for which Estate was taken from him, and himself put in Prison, without the Permission of one Slave to visit him, which hard Usage brought him into a violent Fever, that soon put an End to his Life. About two Days before he died the Gaoler acquainted his Lady of his Danger, and she, with two small Children, went to the General, and on their Knees, begged that a Doctor might be permitted to visit her Husband, but he was inexorable, and would allow no such Favour, only granted her Leave to be in Prison with him till he died, and she stayed but one Day and a Part of a Night till he expired. When the Tragedy was over, she was going Home to her distressed Family, but found her slaves and Children removed to a little outhouse of hers, and the Doors of her Dwelling-house shut against her. The Lady had two Sisters married on the Island, and she, hoping to find Relief from them, went to visit the eldest, but she met her at the Door and told her she could have no Admittance, her Husband being liable to Proscription if he admitted her into his House; and she believed the other Sister's Husband durst not entertain her in his House. The poor Lady, full of Sorrow and Grief, being abandoned by all her Friends and Relations, went back to her distressed Family,

and having no visible Way of Support, had some Thoughts of putting an End to her Miseries: but her Sisters, unknown to their Husbands, sent her some Relief by a trusty female Slave in the Night, and a Letter, (that they desired her to burn as soon as she had read) wherein they promised to be assisting in the Maintenance of her and her Children, till the Almighty should think proper to deliver her out of the Persecution.

“The poor Lady had both Beauty and Discretion, enough to recommend her to the virtuous Part of Mankind; but none of the Gentlemen that wisht her well, durst make Addresses to her, only one, who had the Command of a Ship in the *Indian* Merchants Service, as he had no Dependence on the General, or his Masters in England, thought he could not well come within the Reach of their Persecution, so he courted her, and married her, but that was thought a capital Crime, and the General acquainted his *Indian* Owners, that without they discharged him their Service, they should also find the Weight of his Displeasure; and accordingly, to avoid Contests with his Excellency, he was discharged; But Grief put an End to his Troubles, for he died within a Year after his marriage, and left the poor Lady another Child to take Care of, but left her above £1000 *Sterl.* of Stock for her and her family's Support.”

From all of which it is evident that that Child (of hell), full of callous malice, never had a decent, honest thought, even when he was asleep, and had he lived to 100, would have made a bad bargain in repentance.

About the year 1685 Gerald Augier recommended that a supply of women should be sent out from England. "This proposal was acceded to by the Court of Directors, and apparently improved upon, for they not only induced such persons as were adapted to be wives of private soldiers to come," "but Gentlewomen and other women." Unhappily "the gentlewomen had not learned before they left England to behave themselves; therefore their countrymen at Bombay were not forward in offering them hearts and hands. Some, however, married; but a judicious observer, who visited the island soon after, was shocked to see how sickly their children were in consequence of the free and easy way in which the mothers lived, and their inveterate habit of taking strong liquor."

"And what was to become of those who remained single? Of course they supposed that the company were their honorable guardians, and that if they could not find husbands, they would at least have the protection of Government. Not so the Company. To the first party indeed a guarantee was given that they should be supported for the first year and if, at the expiration of that time, they were still unmarried, they should be allowed their diet for another year. This engagement was faithfully kept. But then came out a second party, fondly expecting they would be treated like their predecessors; indeed, they affirmed "that so much was declared to them at East India House by Mr. Lewis." Nevertheless their claims were not recognised. After considerable agitation on their part, six or



eight pagodas (pagoda about 8 shillings) a month were allowed to "*such as were actually in distress.*" The President and Council, in writing to the Court made a merit of this base and cruel economy. "We have refused to put you to this charge," they wrote "declaring we have no order from you, which hath caused some discontent among them ; only we have thought fit to assist those who are more objects of charity, to keep *them from perishing for want of sustenance.*" The poor creatures had clearly been deluded and left to starve. The small stock of virtue brought out with them, they were driven to sell ; that was, of course, soon expended." (Well, if every dog has his day, every cat is entitled to her night out.) "Then the voice of authority and mocking piety assumed a threatening tone. "And whereas," wrote the President and Council, "you give us notice that some of the women are grown scandalous to our nation, religion, and Government interest, we require you in the Honorable Company's name to give them all fair warning that they do apply themselves to a more sober and Christian conversation ; otherwise the sentence is this, that they shall be confined totally of their liberty to go abroad, and fed with bread and water, until they are embarked on board ship for England." Poor souls ! They had come to a land where hope was a contraband article, reduced to that stage where they could not afford to buy or to go without. They were without the means to economise. Someone, more charitable, wrote—"The woman who presents herself to Heaven saying "I have made a man

happy" will always be admitted. Love is woman's virtue." But Heaven is far off. They learned that a man may defy opinion ; a woman must submit to it. And to be treated thus by men who had neither morals, honesty, nor sobriety, but who mouthed pious phrases with satisfaction to themselves must have made their destitution the harder to bear.

Let us start with the voyage out:—

"How shall I paint the plagues I bore,  
To reach this so-much-talked-of shore?"

writes a lady in the Calcutta Gazette of 1784, and it might be applied to the voyages experienced fifty years later.

"She detests what she has seen of India, and evidently begins to think "papa and mamma" were right in withholding for a year their consent to her marriage. I think she wishes they had held out another month. There is another, Mrs.....only fifteen, who married when we were at the Cape, and came from there at the same time we did, and went straight on to her husband's station, where for five months she had never seen a European. He was out surveying all day, and they lived in a tent. She had utterly lost her health and spirits, and, though they have come down here for three weeks furlough, she has never been able to call here.

"He came to make her excuse, and said, with a deep sigh, "Poor girl! she must go back to her solitude. She hoped she could have gone out a little in Calcutta to give her something to think about." And then if these poor women have the comfort of children, they must send them away

just as they become amusing. It is an abominable place. I do not mean so much for us, who come for a short time and can have a fleet, or *an army to take us anywhere* for change of air if we have pains in our sides, but for people who earn their bread in India, and must starve if they give it up, .....

In *Real Life in India by an Old Resident*, published in 1874, it is written—"In the olden time it was considered a reproach to a woman that she was going to India. Her enterprise was regarded as an indelicate attempt to force herself upon the hapless bachelors of the East, whose pretensions she was supposed to measure by the length of their respective purses and the chances of their early dissolution. Expatriation was, in fact, treated more as a speculation, and India came to be regarded as a sort of flesh-market, where the best price obtained the best commodity.

"It is unnecessary at this date to inquire how far the "gorgeous East" was merely honoured with the visits of our countrywomen for the sake of its matrimonial advantages ; let it suffice that the reproach of mercenary purposes does not lie at the door of those ladies who go to India at the present day." That was said nearly a century ago and nothing appears to bring to memory the jibes about the "fishing fleet" who used to start angling as soon as the cold weather started. And it has never been proved that marriages brought about in that deliberate manner turned out otherwise than "normal" which certainly is more near to lie than the term "happy."

"The sprightly young lady who wrote under the name Sophia Goldbourne states that at Church in Calcutta 'ancient custom' allowed any gentleman without introduction to meet any lady at the entrance as she stepped from her palanquin, and, taking her hand, to lead her to her seat. The gallants who availed themselves of this antique usage, were mostly "old fellows" who chiefly made a point of "repairing to the holy dome" on the Sundays after the arrival of the Europe ships, and not seldom a choice for life had thus been made, the new importations "becoming brides in the utmost possible splendour," having "their rank instantaneously established and are visited and paid every honour to which the consequence of their husbands entitle them."

An officer who came out in 1805 was of opinion that "were a country gentleman, in the full enjoyment of all his bodily faculties in this happy climate, to be suddenly transported to St. John's Church, in Calcutta during the divine service in the month of June, he would fancy himself seated among ghosts. He would look upon their sallow countenances with fear, and see the big drops coursing each other on the anxious brow, notwithstanding the large fans suspended overhead and drawn backwards and forwards, to produce an artificial circulation of air."

Busteed the historian was of opinion that Warren Hastings knew nothing about punkahs but it is curious that when Martin & Co., took over Burn & Co., they found in the office at 7, Hastings Street, a most ornate punkah on which was painted by an artist, a hunting scene.

The punkah was sent to the Victoria Memorial, Warren Hastings lived at No. 7, Hastings Street, the premises, well worth a visit, are now occupied by Messrs Fowler & Co., the well-known solicitors.

Count de Warren, a Frenchman serving in the Company's army, let himself go in a chapter about English women in India a century and more ago, when damselerrantry led them, "full of health, of hope, and of gaiety, on a voyage of discovery in search of a husband."

"The adventuress, having arrived in Calcutta, looks around for what she has come—a husband. Assuredly she will not have any difficulty in finding one, she will only be embarrassed by the number she may choose from—old and young, civil and military, patrician and plebeian; from the old general with his periodical bilious attacks and his parchment visage, which has not perspired for the last ten years, for the sun has sucked out all the moisture, to the young red-and-white ensign, who makes eyes at them whilst he wipes off the large drops that roll down his forehead. She is scarcely landed, before, in the very first fortnight, she is overwhelmed with offers of marriage. The poor young creature is so stunned with the flatteries which buzz in her ears, that at length her poor little head, never one of the strongest, is completely turned. She begins to think that she really possesses all the perfections which are attributed to her: and she is told so often that she is an angel, that she knows not how to limit her pretensions in the great matter of the *establishment*. The aunt preaches to her,

morning and night, against lowering herself by condescending to dance with anyone under the rank of a first class civilian, or an officer of high standing in the enjoyment of a fat appointment, who can bestow on his bride thrice indispensable things, and which in India are considered necessary for the happiness of conjugal life; namely, a silver teapot, a palanquin with a set of bearers for visits by day, and a buggy for the evening drive."

Failing in all efforts to make a desirable match, we are told by the Count that the lady, "all forlorn", at length goes pretendedly for her health to a distant station, and then marries a poor subaltern, to learn that

"Love in a hut with water and a crust  
Is love, forgive us, cinders, ashes, dust."

In those days people went in for big meals—that is when they could afford it. Even in my day tonics were recommended, not only to improve the appetite, but to make you hold more. One of those women who believe that food is what you have between meals, told a few sympathisers who called to see how she was—"I've had my diet. Now I'll have my dinner."

"Quiz" in *Qui Hai*, (1816) expressed disgust at seeing one of the prettiest girls put away two pounds of mutton chops at one sitting. Girls of 14 to 16 have fine appetites but for a short time only.

Count de Warren's opinion of the manners of these ladies is not very favorable. He admitted that they were more intelligent than the ladies of the same class in France, but complains that they affected a childish simplicity—"an affecta-

tion of ignorance on the one side, impossible after all they have read, fresh from their infancy, in unmutilated editions of the Bible."

But now we have the young ladies at dinner. "If you are a Frenchman, you will be thunderstruck at the enormous quantity of beer and wine absorbed by these young English ladies, in appearance so pale and delicate. I could scarcely recover from my astonishment at seeing my fair neighbour quietly dispose of a bottle and a half of very strong beer, eked out with a fair allowance of claret, and wind up with five or six glasses of light but spirited champagne taken with her dessert. The only effect it seemed to produce upon her was visible in the diminished languor of her manner, and the increased brilliancy of her eyes. I hoped at first she was an exception ; but I was very soon convinced that she but exemplified the rule. It is in this manner that the majority of English ladies combat the lassitude of mind and body induced by the climate ; but the time soon comes when such a regimen as this destroys their health. They are then compelled to leave their husbands, and return with their children to Europe. But the fatal habit is contracted ; the voyage home only tends to strengthen it. As time advances, it becomes more deeply rooted ; and too often the brandy bottle is the miserable finale of the sweet creatures, who left their mother's arms and their father's roof all bright in purity and beauty." All of which looks as if Count de Warren's description is overcharged with literary skill, perhaps like so many of his readers, highly coloured.

A Madrassi butler had a slightly different opinion.

"All English lady very pretty,• innocent, simple thing, Master, when first come, same as young gentlemen ; but after one, two year, ha ! they know as much as is good. Yes, yes, English ladies very clever ladies, doubtless no doubt ; very soon make better bargain with sircar than master."

George Johnson, writing in 1830 says—"It will sound outrageous to "ears polite" that, when a lady is challenged during dinner, she very frequently takes beer instead of wine. I have heard of four "burra bebbees" who, in the olden times, daily took tiffin at each other's houses, and drank a dozen of Hodgson's pale ale before they retired from the table to their couches."

And I watched a lady after dinner put away six quarts of Allsopp's without moving from her chair.

Only two years ago I remember an old retired officer putting away 37 quarts of beer in one day. There are three front doors in Spence's Hotel. He would walk out of one door, ask the durwan "Where's Spence's Hotel?" and on a door being pointed out would walk in and announce his arrival with "Ha ! here we are at last !" So the ladies cannot claim all the honours.

Teetotal ideas met with little encouragement from the mediaeval Church. The unfortunate Mary Queen of Scots, in the midst of her troubles, seems not to have been oblivious of the attractions of the national beverage ; for when she was confined in Tutbury Castle, the question was asked



by her secretary, Walsingham, as to "what place neere Tutbury beere may be provyded for Her Majesty's 'use," to which the answer came from Sir Ralph Sadler, the governor of the castle, "that beere may be had at Burton, three miles off."

Other great personages were fond of beer. The Emperor of Russia, Peter the Great, and the Empress Catherine, were extremely partial to Burton ale, which in those days was high coloured and sweet and of very great strength especially suited to the Russian palate.

It must be admitted that when the girls had 'made their bazar' they were awarded full marks.

"IN a few Days Edward Hay Esq., Secretary of State for the Southern Department, is to be Married to Miss Wagstaff, a most Beautifull, Amiable, and highly Accomplish'd Young Lady—Sister in Law to Col. Morgan, a Lady endow'd with every elegant requisite to render the Marriage state (what it was intended to be) a scene of Extatic Joy and felicity."—*Bengal Gazette*, Saturday May 26th, 1781.

"MARRIED at MADRAS. Mr. Richard Nowland to Miss Cuthbert of the same place with a fortune of 5000 Star Pagodas (about Rs. 30,000) and Mr. Cuthbert's friendship—who intends giving him the Rice Contract, and Mr. Ferguson lately had; the lady is well accomplished." Saturday September 22, 1781.

"In March last, Captain Foggo, late of the *Belle Packet*, to Miss Stewart, a beautiful and accomplished young lady, aged 17, late passenger for Bengal on board the *Belle*, but captured and carried in with that vessel to Rochelle."

Up to a few years ago it was the custom to publish lists of wedding presents and donors: a sort of Society blackmail which led to trouble in finding something inexpensive which looked, in print, like a lot. A story is told about one of the Dukes of Devonshire, reading the paper, asked his secretary what sort of a present was a "set of six napkin rings." He was told that few people could afford clean linen at every meal, so each member of a family had a ring with a number so that he could see which of the napkin rings was his. "Good God!" exclaimed the horrified Duke.

In *Light and Shade in Bygone India* Lieut. Colonel L. H. Thornton relates:—"One occasion, curiously enough, an unfortunate misunderstanding arose owing to a ship-load of young persons, who had safely weathered all the storms both inside and outside of the Round House, landing in India with their wardrobes complete. They brought with them the latest modes, but of these no fashion plates had been received in advance. Hence it came about that Calcutta society, being unprepared for the sight of frocks without waists, jumped to the uncharitable and wholly unmerited conclusion that the young persons had arrived in that state which the Press hints at when it states in the columns devoted to fashionable intelligence that "Mrs. So-and-so has to be careful not to over-tax her strength just now."

The Madras correspondent of Hicky's *Bengal Gazette* reported in 1781 that a bevy of eleven young ladies who had come to India to make some rich man put on the matrimonial crown

of thorns, disappointed their friends when they got through the surf off that port.

"It had been expected that the new arrivals would have brought with them the latest fashions in hats and clothes, and indeed they had left home with a very adequate stock. Unfortunately, during the last three months of the voyage, tempers had been worn rather thin—the differences of opinion amongst the occupants of the Round House had been so acute that when the eleven young persons landed, they could not show a single undamaged hat between them. Clothes had been torn to shreds. So far, therefore, the newcomers were forced to re-equip themselves from the out-of-date stock in the local shops."

All that helps to prove, in a millinery sense, the truth in the Indian proverb—"It isn't always the woman last from the well who brings the freshest water." It must also be remembered that woman always was the fighting animal. For a real scrap, take two women and one man!

Mrs. Fay, whose *Letters from India*, (published in 1818) were republished under the auspices of the Calcutta Historical Society in 1908 through the efforts of the Rev. W. K. Firminger, left England with her husband on April 10, 1779. In her earliest letters she gives an account of a journey from Paris to Leghorn, partly in a chaise and partly on horseback. Her economies were minute for she records her disgust with an unreasonable hotel keeper who charged half-a-crown a night for a bedroom. Mrs. Fay preferred the inns where guests slept

in the fashion recorded at the close of Sterne's *Sentimental Journey* and at four sous a night, not for a room, but for one bed out of possibly six. The most remarkable thing is that, although Mrs. Fay has much to say as to her discomforts, yet she was making her way through France when England and France were at war.

Over the Alps to Italy, they embarked at Leghorn for Alexandria, thence to Suez via Cairo and down the Red Sea.

Taking ship at Mocha—"during the first fortnight of our voyage my foolish complaisance stood in my way at table, but I soon learned our genteel maxim "catch as catch can ; the longest arm fared best and you cannot imagine what a good scrambler I have become. Provisions running very short, we have grown quite savages, two or three of us perhaps fighting for a bone."

The ship in which they sailed touched at Calicut where they were seized by the officers of Hyder Ally, and for fifteen weeks endured all the hardships and privations of a rigorous imprisonment aggravated by the quarrelsome ignorance of her husband, an Irish barrister. The journey to Calcutta took twelve months and eighteen days.

Sir Elijah Impey, Chief Justice of Bengal, wrote, while at Patna on August 31, 1781, his opinion of Fay. "There is a very low man of the name of Fay who had been called to the bar in England, and therefore, I thought it proper he should be admitted an advocate here."

Impey, who came out on £8000 a year about 1774 is credited with saying on landing to other

judges who came with him that within six months he would have all these poor victims of oppression wearing decent shoes and stockings. He revelled in haranguing for an hour or longer, poor devils brought before him and inflicted the severest sentences. When Warren Hastings was impeached, efforts were made to impeach Impey, but he kept out of England, a judge who feared being judged.

Mrs. Fay has much to say about her discomforts and the senseless way in which her husband quarrelled with everybody over trifles and in which he seems to have been always wrong ; she suffered much, but her escapes were on the whole more remarkable than her sufferings.

In 1781 her husband, after making life intolerable left her, and with nothing but her clothes, she had to make her way in the world at a time when women were economically helpless.

By good luck she missed taking a passage in the *Grosvenor*, a ship laden with gold and diamonds, and carrying some of the most prominent people of Calcutta, but lost on the coast of Natal where the fate of the women was the worst that could happen to them. When a relief party came upon them some four years later, they refused to leave their Zulu partners and children. The wreck of the *Grosvenor* is one of the most tragic stories of Calcutta people.

Finding a passage in the *Valentine*, commanded by Captain Lewis, a naughtical gent with salt in his blood, whose charming manners attracted her

and other ladies, she writes: "he is by no means the placid being we supposed. Instead of paying attention or shewing respect he *exacts* both. He is the roughest being surely that nature ever formed in language and manners. The oaths he swears by are the most horrible, and he prides himself on inventing new ones". Evidently a man who felt that he had no time to specialize in courtesy.

We have met those men who, on shore, lead one to believe they hanker after Sunday-school books, but at sea are master mariners, master of mouth-filling oaths with a Scriptural-cum-scarlet intonation occasionally touching 212 Fahr, bristling with metaphor and grammar that could give a 4th class passenger lockjaw. One can imagine the lady passengers, during a sudden squall saying to one another the current equivalent of, "that's a new one on me!" Let us hope they did not surpass their most sanguinary expectations and that the Recording Angel was asleep or absent on duty at the time. Well it gave the ladies something to talk about and—anything for an unquiet life! The puzzle is—how did those ladies know the oaths were quite new?

From what one reads, Calcutta was a place

Where strong men greet the morn with scores  
Of very striking metaphors.

In the days when parents decided to try the Indian fishing fleet as "some convenient stowage for their wither'd daughters," the girls were like men who leave their native land for the good of their purses—they left with heavy hearts. Their

parents may have prayed for them when they left, but from all accounts they were almost jeered at, when they arrived. Crowds of lads from Fort William gathered at Chandpal Ghat in their red coats to look them over when they landed. Most of them stayed with friends. But in those uncertain days, friends died, went bankrupt, or disappeared while the girls were on their way out. If they found life in a dinghy lying off the Ghat more than could be endured, and were so unfortunate as to be forced to put up at local taverns, their surroundings alone compelled them to lose little time in accepting the first offer. If they didn't marry the man they loved, they had to love the man they married, and they may have been as 'happy' as other couples.

Many who started full of hope must have bitterly regretted finding that, in the end, they had

"Stooped to marry half a heart,  
Little more than half a liver."

The accomplished punster, Tom Hood, knew all about that when he wrote—

"Go where the maiden on a marriage plan goes,  
Consigned for *wedlock* to Calcutta's *quay*,  
Where *woman* goes for market, the *man* goes  
And think of me."

While no travelled man can truthfully admit that he believes modern women are worse than their grandmothers and I, for one, believe they are better, it must be admitted that the modern girl would not submit to the restrictions grandma, and particularly great-grandmamma, were expected to endure.

For a consideration in passage money Mrs. Fay chaperoned four young ladies to Bombay in 1784. They were over four months on the journey and probably waited many days at the Downs for a favourable breeze before making a start. In collusion with the captain she "guarded against imprudent attachments which are more easily formed than broken." So the ladies went on deck but five times. No wonder one of the poor girls died of a "confirmed liver complaint" shortly after her arrival in Bombay.

There is a venerable and useful superstition that one woman is perfectly safe if another woman is pretending to look after her, but with Mrs. Fay there was no pretence about it. She resembled another of her sex who, when told by a girl friend—"I'm going for a walk after dinner with the Chief Officer," was greeted with—"Are you? Well, my dear, take my advice. Keep on walking".

Travelling ladies, so closely looked after, must, in those times, have worried almost as much about the welcome they would find as they did about the sort of husband likely to be picked up. Many girls unwanted at home, driven by disappointment to see what chance there was of a few droppings from the pagoda tree must have often gone through agonies of anxiety. As John Bunyan put it in the *Pilgrim's Progress* :—

"Some things are of that nature as to make  
One's fancy chuckle while the heart doth ache."

Several business ventures of Mrs. Fay's were full of trials and anxieties which produced little more than a train of blasted hopes and heart-



rending disappointments but she was a lover of Calcutta and grateful for many blessings.

In 1818<sup>o</sup> the *Calcutta Gazette* contained: "Mrs. Fay died in Calcutta a few months ago at an advanced age, after superintending the printing of the portion of her literary labours: she had not then exhausted her journal, and since her death the publication of the remainder has been stopped."

There is a vast difference between the old wind,boat of the Good Old Days, when a voyage to India might take anything up to twelve months, and a cruise in a modern luxury liner. Mrs. Fay would now have her hands full and been forced to keep her eyes open as wide as they would go to keep her charges out of the sight of men. Easy communications make bad manners.

Some wag expressed the opinion that the modern girl fills both hands with liberty once out of sight of land. Another said that the character of woman was written in invisible ink, not readable until warmed in front of fire. And a modern traveller summed cruises up in two lines:—

"The sea's an excuse to be disgracefully loose  
In behaviour, voice and attire."

There are others. Crossing the Line some years ago a padre with very white, fat legs, was charged before King Neptune with "Wearing the shortest and roomiest shorts on record, greatly to the embarrassment of the ship's cat."

Those now-a-days who look upon a voyage out East in a good ship, will gather from Mrs. Sherwood's experiences something about the

journey 140 years ago. Mrs. Sherwood was the wife of Captain Sherwood, Paymaster of the 53rd Regiment.

"The regiment embarked on the 20th of April 1805 and as the Major had the privilege of choosing the officer's wife who should sail in the same cabin with himself and his family, and he being one of Mrs. Sherwood's oldest friends, his choice naturally fell on her. But he arrived so late in Portsmouth that she could not make any selection of her cabin, for she did not know in which ship she would sail, and she had scarcely time to make any arrangements before they were obliged to be on board. By then every cabin on board the *Devonshire*, their vessel, was taken, and it was only by giving a handsome bribe to the ship's carpenter that they could induce him to let them have his, in which there was a great gun, with its mouth facing the porthole. Their hammocks were slung above this gun, and were so near the top of the cabin that they could scarcely sit up in bed. When the pumps were at work the bilge fan through this miserable place, and to finish its discomfort, it was only separated by a canvas screen from the part where the soldiers sat, and probably dressed and slept also, so that it was absolutely necessary for its present occupant to retire to it in all weathers before any of the men were turned down for the night.

"Uncomfortable as it was, Mrs. Sherwood was not to have it until she was truly thankful for any place of refuge, for according to some rule which she could not understand, the carpenter dared not let them have the use of his

cabin until the pilot had left the ship. She spent much of the day sitting on a gun-carriage amidst the confusion on deck, and feeling so utterly miserable that she could not help giving way to her wretchedness once when the clock in the Portsmouth dock-yard began to strike the hour. It began to rain towards afternoon, and her friend, the Major, deeply pained by seeing her in such a situation, brought his cloak, and laid it over her shoulders for some protection.

“Unhappy as she was, she was still conscious that there were others more wretched than herself. Each company was only allowed to take out ten women, but when they came to be numbered on board the *Devonshire*, there was found to be one too many, and lots were drawn on deck to determine who was to be sent home. Mrs. Sherwood saw the agony of the poor woman who was to be carried back to the shore ; saw her wring her hands, and heard her cries as she left, and felt that whatever her own hardships might be, her trials were nothing to be compared to this poor creature’s.

Mrs. Sherwood relates—“I had the privilege of choosing one of the women to be my servant on the voyage, and of course I could do no other than choose our man-servant’s (Luke Parker’s) wife, Betty. By this Betty Parker was assured of her passage as my servant.

“Fellow passengers were coming on board during the whole of the day, and I watched their coming as I sat on the gun-carriage until the miserable hours wore away..... We sailed for the

Needles with a strong wind from the east, and I become dreadfully seasick. At seven in the evening we anchored opposite Yarmouth."

The following day "notwithstanding that we had been roused before it was light, but the pilot was on board and we were under observation from the authorities on shore, I could not have the cabin until late at night. I had therefore no refuge amid all the confusion on deck and I spent most of the day sitting on a gun-carriage looking on the shores of my native land—that land which contained my mother and my child. Had I only one lady of the regiment to associate with, I should have had some consolation."

"We had on board eleven officers, nineteen cadets, and several gentlemen of the civil service for Madras. I saw all these passengers come in as I sat on the gun-carriage; and thus that miserable day wore out, and at night we got our cabin, though not before I was thoroughly thankful for it."

From all that has been written about our great-great-grandmothers it must be remembered that without ice, punkhas, or health trips to the Hills, hardship was their lot. To writers in particular, vice is news—virtue isn't, so the dark side is depicted as being more palatable to their readers. Ask any small children—"What story shall I tell you? One about a good little girl, or one about a bad little boy?" All plump for the bad little boy. The girl, who, breathlessly describing her sensations wrote—"This state of suspense is terrible! It is simply killing me by inches! I do hope it will last!" wasn't com-

menting upon something in a missionary book—that most misleading form of literature.

Even fair-minded folk act upon the principle that you need not believe all you hear, but you can repeat it. A cynic said that a woman's mind is cleaner than a man's because she changes it so often, but a woman's mind *is* cleaner than a man's, change or no change.

As Mrs. Malaprop says—"Be ye as pure as snow and as chaste of ice ye shall never escape calomel."

## DAK BUNGALOWS

“Dharamsalas and Sarais for the use of indigenous travellers have existed in India, as in all eastern countries from time immemorial, but it is not easy to say when the first rest house was established.”

Hobson-Jobson has quite a lot about dak bungalows.

“A rest house for the accommodation of travellers formerly maintained (and still to a reduced extent) by the paternal care of the Government of India. The accommodation was humble enough, but comprised the things essential for the weary traveller—shelter, a bed and table, a bathroom, and a servant furnishing food at a very moderate cost. On principal lines of thoroughfare those bungalows were at a distance of ten or fifteen miles apart, so that it was possible for a traveller to make his journey by marches without carrying a tent. On some less frequented roads they were forty or fifty miles apart, adapted to a night’s run in a palanquin.”

The East India Company would not build dak bungalows in the towns, on the assumption that visitors would be hospitably entertained by the residents. A sample of Indian mentality which invariably believes in hope founded on humbug.

In *Real Life in India by an Old Resident* he states: “A every fifteen miles or so, along the

roads most frequented there are bungalows, (cottages on a ground floor) where you may stop and breakfast, dine, and enjoy the luxury of a cold bath. There are two servants whose tenure of office and the receipt of an occasional gratuity, depends upon their civility and attention, so they are generally found extremely assiduous." (1847.)

For nine years I knocked about between the Panjab and Burma, living mostly in dak bungalows and finding few of them good. Occasionally travellers met who were sociable and life was bearable. As a traveller who paid one rupee had no claim for a room for more than twentyfour hours, it happened that on return at the close of the day, I have found my scanty kit thrown into the compound. A new arrival had claimed his rights and expressed no word of regret. If the bungalow was occupied by a Government servant his chaprassis would not let you in on any account.

On one occasion I was able to throw out the belongings of a man who had turned me out but he was leaving the station and did not give me the satisfaction of seeing him sleeping under the tree I had patronised the night before.

"The Dak Bungalow Fowl" (Sudden Death) is the foundation of every delicacy. The traveller on arrival has to sign the visitors' book and is asked "Does your Honour require a meal?" He expresses his ability to supply "What Master pleases." Considering all things it is astonishing what can be put on the table from the time a chicken is running about loose, hungry, and

happy, to being served up as soup, grilled, curried and roasted, with a brown custard, to finish, by the time the traveller has bathed and dressed. A khansamah once apologised to me for having no vinegar, to make the custard, the vinegar being necessary to curdle the milk, an operation apparently necessary to take the small percentage of milk out of the water.

A newcomer, writing in a dak bungalow book after seeing the khansamah knock out a leggy chicken with a half brick and found it on the dinner table a little over an hour later expressed the opinion that "I am inclined to think the value of life to a dak bungalow fowl must be very trifling."

Men complain about the Indian fowl but is it any worse that the cold-store chicken in England? Eggs, too, are small but fresher than those supplied even in first class hotels in Europe. I remember a boy spending his holiday in my house in Bournemouth where we kept chickens who complained at breakfast—"There's no taste in these eggs," having grown used to eggs of greater age and sanctity.

In 1781 British officers, prisoners of war at Seringapatam suffered great privations for more than three years. John Lindsay, one of the unfortunates, kept a journal in which he states—"Today have six eggs for my dinner—find five of them rotten—am going to throw them away, but T—who has a voracious appetite, and never enough to satisfy it, takes and eats them, saying that I am too nice for a prisoner upon a Fanam (2½d) per day."



We are reminded of the story of the old Colonel at the siege of Seringapatam in 1799 when supplies were scarce. Seated one morning at breakfast next to a young officer, the seasoned campaigner observed his neighbour pushing away, with every mark of disgust, a boiled egg which he had just opened. "What's the matter with your egg?" said the veteran. "It's got a chicken inside it," was the reply. "Chicken" said the old soldier, "give it to me, I'll eat it, I wish it were as big as a goose."—*Light and Shade in Bygone India*, p. 80. Lt.-Col. L. H. Thornton.

Anything can happen in a dak bungalow. Henry Newman ("Kim" of the *Statesman*) found a leopard on the bed in the Central Provinces. Civet cats who galloped across the ceiling cloth, snakes in the compound, bats which stink worse than a cartload of monkeys have flopped on my face or into my plate, red ants that sting, centipedes, to say nothing about jackals which howled like a woman in mortal agony, and, in the rains, millions of green flies and flying bugs were ordinary happenings in my young days. I found the body of an artillery subaltern on the dak bungalow bed in Toungoo, and have stayed myself for a week in the Bareilly dak bungalow; too ill to move, unattended because the servants, fearing the attentions of the police in the event of my death, had bolted.

Viscountess Falkland, who published *Chow Chow* in 1857 states that she saw the following lines which a dying man had scratched on the wall of a dak bungalow near Karachi.

“As on this bed of pain I lie,  
 And count the hours of this long day,  
 And think, with terror, I must die,  
 And scarcely even dare to pray.”  
 “.....Yes! it has come at last—  
 The last on this sad earth for me—  
 The time for hope, repentance, past—  
 An eternity of what’s to be!  
 And I have laughed this hour to scorn—  
 And deemed this life an endless age—  
 The light of a returning morn—  
 The man is (illegible) turn the page.”

Writing in 1853 Oakfield was of opinion that some Oriental travellers have described Dak Bungalows as the Inns of India. Playful satirists!

Most of the khansamahs had worked for good families and were rewarded with a semi-Government job which provided a place to live in with a chance of making a little. Occasionally I have enjoyed an excellent curry cooked by a civil old gentleman whose clothing was neither purple nor fine linen but was only too anxious to please. Yet it was the custom to vent upon these decent, respectable and respectful old men all the discomforts of the day.

After a hot journey the lonely traveller finds welcome shade, a pull-punkah and the comfort of a bath ; and even if the bungalow is about as sociable as a tombstone it soon begins to feel like Home Sweet Home.

## 'BOMBAY TAVERNS

When the English first came to India they settled at Surat in what is known now as the Bombay Presidency.

Terry, who afterwards became Chaplain to Sir Thomas Roe arrived with him on September 24th 1615. An English cook was brought with the Mission, of whom it is said, he "was at least as anxious to provide good liquor for himself as savoury viands for his master." Surat must have offered few attractions to such a thirsty soul, for when Fryer visited it some years later, he saw an Armenian flogged through the city, simply because he had been detected in the act of selling liquor. But Akbar, the late Emperor, had published a decree permitting intoxicating liquor to be sold to Europeans, because he said, "they are born in the element of wine, as fish are produced by that of water," "and to prohibit them the use of it is to deprive them of life." In consequence of Akbar's consideration for a national failing, the cook was so lucky as to light upon a shop where they sold what was called Armenian wine. "But," remarks Terry, who would have made a first-class Prohibitionist, "I do believe there was scarce another in that populous city of that trade; the greater shame for those, whosoever they be, that suffer so many unnecessary tippling-houses (in the place where they have the power to restrain them), which are the Devil's nursery, the very tents wherein Satan dwells, where Almighty

God receives abundance of dishonour; drunkenness being a sin which hath hands and fingers to draw all other sins unto it; for a 'drunkard can do anything or be anything but good.' After making these moral reflections by the way, Terry records that the English cook got very drunk and sallied out into the streets. As he staggered along he met the Mogul Governor's brother with his attendants. Balancing himself upon his sheathed sword the drunkard cried out: "Now thou heathen dog!" The Native gentleman did not understand him, and civilly inquired what he wanted. The cook's reply was a stroke with his sword and scabbard, upon which the bystanders interfered, seized and carried him to prison. When the account of this awkward occurrence was brought to the Ambassador, he begged the Governor's brother to deal as he pleased with his insolent retainer. However, the fellow met with more consideration than he deserved, being set at liberty without suffering any punishment.

Other difficulties were mentioned. "Thus, the English love of beef gave great offence to the, "Banyans," (Brahmins) who paid the Muhammadans an annual sum to stop cow-killing. A curious sailor peeps into a litter containing a *purdah* lady; a page boy pokes his finger into a Brahmin's food!" All such offences being obviously taken in good part showing that there was more toleration then than now.

Sir Thomas Roe remarked with disgust the prevalence of intemperance amongst Europeans at Surat, and wondered that it was tolerated by the native Government. Drunkenness, he writes

and "other exorbitances proceeding from it were so great in that place that it is rather wonderful they were suffered to live." "The manners of the young men in the Factory were extremely dissolute, and on that account they were continually involved in quarrels with the natives. Even the President, after passing the night on board the ship which brought Pietro della Valle (a travelling Italian nobleman) no sooner rose in the morning than he began drinking burnt wine."

Which looks as if they were stout fellows who, even though they left off late at night, they made a healthy start the next morning. But it is evident that with so much drunkenness there must have been a considerable amount of crime. Well, they were, soldier and civilian, court-martialled under the most implacable, the most impartial law in the world—the survival of the fittest—the elimination of the unfit.

A curious light is also shewn by the following:—"Boys, also, called 'pe-uns' were waiting and ready for four pice a day to act as interpreters or run errands for strangers." We learn they could "prattle quite prettily in English."

Official records dated August 13, 1694 state that John Wright obtained permission to keep a tavern in Bombay. To give an idea of the minutiae to which legislation descended at that time it was ordered that, "if any man comes into a victualling house to drink punch, he may demand one quart of good Goa arrack, half a pound of sugar, and half a pint of good lime water, and make his own punch. And if the

bowle be not marked with the clerk of the market's seale, then the bowle may be freely broken without paying anything either for the bowle or the punch."

"Cases of poisoning were said to be frequent at these taverns. The rude manners of British seamen led them to use a freedom with the dark ladies who frequented such places, for which they occasionally paid the penalty of their lives. A rough kiss when a tar was under the excitement of liquor, or an offensive piece of raillery, would so disgust 'the black wench' whose employment it was to make that 'beloved mixture, punch or arak' that she would contrive with a subtle skillfulness to make the bowl fatal to the man who had abused her, whilst his companions drank without the slightest injury to themselves."—*The English in Western India*, Philip Anderson, A.M. (1854.)

In 1782 "House of entertainment began to be established in Bombay. W. Chambers and David Evhlin desiring that they may be permitted to keep such institutions for strangers." The Board permitted the request, drew up regulations and a scale of rates for them, and four years later permitted Mr. Oliver Geddes to establish "a well-regulated punch-house without the town walls" hoping that European soldiers and seamen would no longer be forced to purchase "from the Bhandaris and others strong inflammatory liquors."

"One of the best known buildings in Bombay was Mr. Hornby's Great House, which stands in his name in the Bombay Collector's rent roll for

*the first time in 1771. Subsequently it was used as an Admiralty house; and has since been improved and converted by a later generation into the Great Western Hotel, facing the main gate of the Government Dockyard.*”—*The Rise of Bombay, A Retrospect* p. 203, S. M. Edwards, (1902.)

These houses of entertainment were obviously not overcrowded with men more honest than the cat when the meat is on the hook.

Major David Price who enlisted in the Company's army in 1781 and was given a cadetship after embarkation before the ship sailed from Gravesend says that he found himself in 1782, securely lodged in the Bombay Hotel, at this period kept by Mr. Macfarlane. At that time his pay was thirty rupees a month so it was not his intention to "remain more than two days, at furthest, in such luxurious and expensive lodgings; and for this I had been provided by the considerate and disinterested liberality of Captain Strover the kind-hearted and respectable Commandèr of the Essex; who when we parted in the morning (April 22nd 1782) had pressed into my hand what was exactly the equivalent to a month's pay of a cadet."

"The dinner hour soon arrived; and as we seated ourselves at the table we threw off our coats and laid them on the backs our chairs. The bottle was gaily circulated, and I partook, without reflection, of the liquid ruby at twelve and sixpence the bottle; claret selling, at that time, at at sixty rupees the dozen. When we were about

to retire for the night, to my utter consternation I found all my treasure gone—the spoiler not having left me a single rupee. Our vile attendants of the hotel had taken advantage of our thoughtless hilarity and thus barbarously robbed me of all I had in the world.”

“EXCHANGE COFFEE HOUSE”

5th April, 1792

“James Fell begs leave to inform the Gentlemen of this Settlement that he will have in future Alamode Beef from Eleven till Two, and from Six till Eight in the Evening, with Salade, &c. Dressed in the same manner as at the Thirteen Cantoons in London.”

“General Harris had in 1798 allowed one John Burden to open a tavern in the Fort, but the proprietor closed the house within a year for want of capital. In 1800 he applied for a renewal of sanction, and the Justices supported his request. Government passed the following order:—“Agreed to authorize the Justices to grant a License for the Tavern recommended by them for a period of one year, as a temporary convenience to the Public; but, as such an institution is inconsistent with the principles on which it is intended to regulate the Fort, Agreed also to desire that the license may not be renewed at the expiration of that time.”

According to James Douglas who gives a long list of hotels and taverns, the Races Banquet was held at the Bombay Hotel in 1799. Duncan Cameron became the sole proprietor some years



later. "Cameron", says Douglas, is immortalised in the pages and pictures of 'Qui Hi.' "

"Quiz", the author, used a powerful pen with which he attacked much in Anglo-Indian life of the time; he is sympathetic in parts, but his book makes sad reading. The title runs—

*The GRAND MASTER, or ADVENTURES of QUI HI in HINDUSTAN, a HUDIBRASTIC POEM in EIGHT CANTOS BY QUIZ.* (1816.)

The poem is the life story of a lad arriving as a Cadet. Apparently he first served in Bengal then sailed to Bombay and on arriving at the Bunder-Head,—

"On this occasion, he thought fit,  
'Twould, very likely, be as well  
To leave his trunks at the hotel."

\* \* \* \*

"And thus our travellers contrive,  
At Duncan's tavern to arrive;  
Our host a rough-spun child of nature,  
Evinc'd the Scot in ev'ry feature.—  
An honest, plain, blunt, knowing fellow,  
Who lov'd a joke, and would get mellow.  
With such a landlord, QUI HI could  
Not feel displeas'd much, if he would.  
Ere Boniface could well appear,  
QUI HI exclaim'd aloud for beer:  
He got some, but so very bad,  
It almost made our hero mad;  
He curs'd the Moorman that had brought it,  
Ask'd him what kind of beer *he* thought it:  
And ere a word the fellow said,  
He threw the tumbler at his head.

The servants run on ev'ry side  
 Some strive in vain, themselves to hide—  
 Some leave their billiards, some their tiffin  
 To see what they all thought a griffin.  
 At length arriv'd old Boniface,  
 And interceded to make peace ;  
 He never could believe it true,  
 His beer! the cause, and sour stuff too,—  
 For he could make it soon appear,  
 'Twas in his godown *a whole year* ;  
 But if he was for beer inclin'd,  
 Another sort he'd quickly find.  
 He then told Bhikajee to go,  
 "And get another, where you know ;"  
 For Duncan was not such a goose,  
 To keep bad beer for *his own use*.  
 The other bottle made amends,  
 And guest and landlord soon are friends.

\*                      \*                      \*                      \*

Our hero now, while dinner waited,  
 The Bombay tavern contemplated:  
 But first the chairs attract his eye,—  
 They each engrain'd with *sans souci* :  
 This made the novice stand and stare—  
 In India people without care!  
 The word was only *on the chair*."

And so on for 252 pages with informative notes which show an intimate knowledge of Indian life.

From what one reads, throwing bottles, glasses, or boots at servants' heads was a common practice not only in India, if there is any truth in Lever's novels. No wonder there were, and are servants' problems.

The Sans Souci Club did much for Duncan's Tavern but he was the only proprietor who lost money and the tavern; all his predecessors made large fortunes. Well, the man who sold bad beer when he had good beer deserved all he got.

Everything can be sold in India unless it is too bad to give to the poor. In 1840 the *Bombay Times* published a letter asking: "What becomes of all the Sour Beer that is sold by auction every year in Bombay?"

The editor replied—"We are unable to answer the question.....We hate all unnecessary interference with the liberty of the subject, but in a matter of so much importance to the health of the community, we should not be sorry to see an enactment passed, rendering it compulsory for all such to be destroyed, or security given that it will not be applied to some other purpose and not doctored up as good beer.....The proportion of sour beer imported this season up to the present time is, we understand greater than in any previous year on record."

In one respect there has been a change for the better for, speaking with some experience, no industry treats customers with more consideration than wine and spirit merchants.

During the last war an Officers' Mess in France received a barrel of beer which did not come up to expectations, so it was presented to the Sergeants' Mess. A few days later a question was asked—

"How did that beer go, Sergeant Major?"

"That beer, Sir, was just right. If it had

been any worse we couldn't have drunk it, and if it had been any better we shouldn't have got it."

One can see by the following that the Club members were the pick of society:—

"On Tuesday last the gentlemen of the Sans Souci Club gave a sumptuous dinner to Major General the Hon'ble Arthur Wellesley and his suite, at the house of Major General Jones, near Bytulla, on which occasion the elegance of entertainment and the attention of its donors to their respectable guest were equally conspicuous."—*Bombay Courier*, March 31, 1804.

From that one gathers that the term "respectable" had a meaning somewhat different from that of to-day.

Wellesley (the Duke of Wellington) disliked India. After the Siege of Seringapatam he expected to be hanged for the death of Tippoo Sultan, but said he would be satisfied in either case, since to him "an English gallows seemed better than an Indian throne."

He was a fine soldier (he never lost a gun), who would have made a successful man of business, and had a sense of humour. He said that the "worst speech I ever heard was made by a Portuguese general before going into action, beginning: "Men, remember you are Portuguese."

Many stories are told about the hero of Waterloo. Full of ambition, he put duty before everything. Political parties were nothing to him when duty was to be done. As he said, when he was in India he was *nimukwallah*—he

had eaten the King's salt and knew it was his place to serve willingly wherever the King's government might see fit to send him.

"Loyalty to the Crown turned out to be a very odd business when the Crown was worn by George IV" and devotion to duty did not prevent the Duke from saying after a brief visit to his King—"Devil take me! I must have got into bad company."

He was said to hate his neighbour but believed in loving his neighbour's wife.

The best known story about him doesn't happen to be true. Stocqueler relates that he asked the Duke—"Did you say 'Up Guards and at'em!' at Waterloo?"

"No?" said the Duke. "I wouldn't have been such a damned fool. Perhaps one of my aides-de-camp may have said it."

Another story is about a visit to Queen Victoria at Windsor Castle. At lunch the Duke saw some fruit in front of him. "Mangoes! by God!" and he polished off the lot. His favourite motto was—"Have something to say and say it," and, apparently, do it.

Mrs. Maria Graham, wife of a Captain in the Royal Navy, kept *A Journal of a Residence in India* which she published in 1813. Under the date of May 28, 1809 she wrote "As there is but one tavern in Bombay, and that is by no means fit for the reception of ladies, the hospitality of the British inhabitants is always exercised towards new-comers, till they can provide a place of residence for themselves."

The solitary tavern referred to must have

been Duncan Cameron's Bombay Hotel and Tavern.

Her book is a pleasant piece of work, well illustrated but according to *Quiz* in *Qui Hi*, she had ruffled the feathers of the 'inhabitants' when she properly made use of the term "Colonists" though "doggrel critics in India attempted to murder her fame."• It seems probable that Colonists were the gentry whom a benevolent Government sent on a more or less tour de luxe to Botany Bay.

In *Glimpses of Old Bombay and Western India*, James Douglas states that "On May 9, 1800, a number of gentlemen dined at Maclean's Hotel to commemorate the capture of Seringapatam."

By 1820 the number of taverns had increased. Figures for October of that year give—"The Bompay Tavern par excellence." "The Mighty Tavern of the East." "In the Fish and Vegetable Bazaar are the Country Tavern, the Duke of Wellington, The Lord Nelson, the Bootful of Mischief and the Chinaman's Tavern."

November 30th, 1825—"A small party at Mr. Cresselman's Hotel held a St. Andrew's Dinner. There was haggis and Glenlivet."

September 1826. The Elphinstone Arms shut up.

November 1835. The Albion Hotel. R T. Hart.

December 14, 1837. Victoria Hotel opened, 15 Apollo Street.

August 24, 1839. A Bombay Hotel Com-

pany started to supply the want of a good hotel.

March 30, 1842. It is remarked "there is no Hotel in Bombay at present," hence a Joint Stock Hotel and Boarding House Company is started with a capital of 2 Lakhs.

Nov. 26th, 1842. The British Hotel and Boarding House, Apollo Street—Mrs. Blackwell—announced that on December 10th of that year a big dinner was given to James Outram (the Bayard of India) at her hotel.

Sir D. E. Wacha states: "About that period (1845) there were several taverns that would not be termed in those days any more than third-rate grogshops. Half a dozen were scattered in the locality of Sonarpur, mostly frequented by soldiers and sailors and low-class clerks and others of the same kidney. Their names have been saved by the "Bombay Gazetteer." One was called "Parsi George", and the other "Portuguese George." A third tavern had the name of "Paddy Goose." We knew of one called the "Green Railing Tavern."

"Anyhow these taverns were the haunts of low-class folk and in many ways disreputable by reason of the vulgar Venuses of the locality who were to be seen there angling (Bombay Ducks?). The barmaids did not come into vogue for another twenty years."

"Dr. Moses' Sketches" states in 1851 that "A single man may live most comfortably on £100 a year.

1850, June 1st. Benson's Hotel, Rampart Row, opened.

1852, June 21st. Sailors' Home, Sanatoriums and Hotels. Filthy. (Apparently that last word was not advertised).

In Dr. Buist's *Guide to Bombay*, published in 1854, he states that there were two good hotels in the Fort, "The British", kept by Mr. Barnes, and "The English", kept by a Parsee.

1856, February 26. Good entertainment for gentlemen and parties visiting this delightful station. Matheran Hotel, R. Basteon.

January, 1857. The *Bombay Quarterly Review* says:—"A broker introduced at a festive dinner at the Family Hotel, the Theodore Hook of the Fort Community, extracts a yellow handkerchief from his white jacket and sings. Considered a wonderful and inimitable being."

• 1858, March 4th. All liquor shops to be closed on Sundays between 10 a.m. and 1-30 p.m. and from 5 to 8 in the evening.

1859, April 1st. •There is a goodly show of hotels. One paper says:—"If people must stand on their dignity there is the Hope Hall; if convenience is preferred above fashion there is the British and English Hotels in the Fort."

#### HOPE HALL FAMILY HOTEL.

"The proprietor of the above establishment has spared neither expense nor trouble to deserve the distinguished patronage with which he has been honoured, and the continuance of which he most respectfully solicits.

"The house is situated in Mazagon, (about three miles from the Fort) on one of the most agreeable, healthy, and fashionable spots of the



island, and contains apartments particularly well adapted for families. Every room has a bathing place, etc. attached to it, and there is a number of single and double pole tents, with very desirable accommodation for single gentlemen. A bungalow containing a billiard table is set apart for smoking, which is not allowed in the house.

"The meals, consisting of breakfast, tiffin, and dinner besides coffee and tea, are served table d'hôte or separately as may be desired.

"For passengers by the Overland route, boats are kept ready to take them on shore as the steamer is anchored. An agent of the establishment will take care and bring to the hotel the luggage, which every passenger is requested to point out to him. Arrived on shore an omnibus belonging to the establishment will bring ladies and gentlemen to the Hotel.

"The proprietor, importing most of the articles of luxury, including beer, wine, and liquors, from England and France direct is enabled to offer the best choice at reasonable rates.

"There are conveyances of all kinds in the establishment to be had at a moment's notice.

#### TERMS OF BOARDING

"Board and lodging for a person occupying one room and taking meals at the table d'hôte:

Per month	...	...	Rs. 130
Fortnight	...	...	Rs. 75
Day	...	...	Rs. 6

Children and European servants Rs. 2 per diem.

J. M. SCHULHOF."

"The proprietor begs most respectfully to draw the attention of messes, families, etc. to his stock of claret, champagne, and other foreign wines and liquors imported by him, which he offers at very low rates if taken from his godown.

N.B.—Board and lodging for a gentleman or lady in their own rooms:—

Per day	...	...	Rs. 7
Fortnight	...	...	Rs. 85
Month	...	...	Rs. 160,

# REDUCED CHARGES OF BOARD AND LODGING FOR FAMILIES.

	Old Charge.	New Charge.
Lady & Gentleman, Table d'hote, per month	Rs. 260	220
Do. Fortnight	Rs. 150	110
Do. Private, p. m. ...	Rs. 320	260
Do. „ Fortnight	Rs. 170	150
CARRIAGE.		
1 horse conveyance, p. m. ...	Rs. 150	100
Do. do. Fortnight	Rs. 75	60
2 horse conveyance, p. m. ...	Rs. 300	200
Do. do. Fortnight	Rs. 150	110

The author, Mr. James Douglas, goes on:—  
"This is a most important document. No question has been more discussed than the cost of living in Bombay, and whether it has been increased or diminished during the past half-century. But something has to be said on the other side for exchange overshadows European

life in India, and makes the life of many scarce worth living out here." (The rupee in 1895 being worth  $12\frac{1}{2}$ d.)

Hotel expenses mean rent, taxes, servants' wages, lights and other items of bed and board. Readers of this document will form their own conclusions. Of course, in addition to the items we have named, there are many luxuries we have added which have become necessities ; but confining ourselves to strictly hotel expenditure, the conclusion seems to be irresistible that there is no difference whatever between 1845 and 1895. The value of the rupee *quoad* all other things, from gold down to coolies' wages, is quite another story. Leaving economists to pursue the subject, we gather from this announcement that smokers were less liberally dealt with than at present, and that the word "bath-room" had not as yet found a place in the hotel owner's dictionary.

To use Mr. J. Douglas's own words—"Let us turn to the following Bombay advertisement of 1845. We give it with its bad spelling, grammar and punctuation:—

"BRITISH HOTEL, BOMBAY.

For the Accommodation of Families and Gentlemen. These specious premises are desirably situate in the Fort, and within five minutes walk of the Banks or Dock Yard, Custom House and principal House of Agency.

Wines and liquors of the best description. Tiffins and Dinners sent out on short notice.

T. BLACKWELL, Proprietor."

But that is not so unfortunate as a more modern advertisement which offered "Lodgings for respectable men and commercial travellers" or an incident in the Scottish Highlands when two men complained of the high charge for drinks and the landlord took it up in earnest demanding to be told by the waiter—"How dare you charge these two men gentlemen's prices?"

Pallonji, an enterprising Parsi opened the Adelphi in 1859. A list of names of residents was published in the Bombay papers on July 16th. "Apart from his courtesy, affability, everything to all men and women, he learnt by practical experience that "terms positively cash" ought not to be inflexible in hotel management. A little judicious relaxation was essential." There is much truth in that. Break up a small crowd who meet to drink in company by stopping the credit of one, and it is possible to lose the active support of half a dozen. Hotel keepers have to take more risks from credit than other business men. "Pallonji was always ready with his purse for the needy and never dragged anyone into court." (His bad debts must have been large).

On August 30th, 1864, Watson, a wealthy draper, bought from Government a plot of land, bidding against the Bombay Club for Rs. 110 per square yard, then considered a fabulous price. On it he built Watson's Hotel and annexe, a large rambling building, which are far in advance of the hotels of the day. It was completed in 1870 and Sir D. E. Wacha relates that: "I vividly recollect how I paid Rs. 20 for a ticket

of admission to the newly built terrace at the top to view the magnificent fireworks" in honour of the visit of the Duke of Edinburgh.

At the time various theatrical companies came to the city, including the troupe of Dave Carson, the humorist.

In 1890 I stayed a month in Watson's and paid, to the best of my recollection, four rupees a day. At that rate the menu was no better than that of a dak bungalow, but the rooms were large and comfortable, and price was then, to me, the first consideration.

Major General Sir H. Hallam Parr, in 1894, put up at a Bombay Hotel "which is an appalling place, frightfully crowded with English and Anglo-Indians, who all have at least two servants. There is no attempt at servants' accommodation and those servants have to lie about as best they can. You may imagine the overcrowding of the narrow passages. Every vantage-point is taken up by a little encampment of ayah or khitmagar and bearer, etc. The feeding and coffee-room arrangements were quite indescribably bad—e. g. the first day our tea for breakfast was brought to us sugared and milked. Friction always between our own servants and the hotel servants—in fine, more discomfort and ten times the fuss that one would have in a dak bungalow, and almost London prices to pay."

I have stayed in the same place finding the servants using the baths and lavatories, and, Indian-like leaving them in a worse condition than when they entered, as many Orientals dislike doing the simplest act of sanitation consider

ing that to be the work of menials. What it means to other people doesn't concern them.

Green's restaurant fifty years ago was the place where one could enjoy P. & O. cold store haddocks and kippers, a great treat then. Many would willingly have paid a couple of rupees for that tasty breakfast dish—a kipper, so there was always a crowd in Green's when the mail steamer was in.

I am indebted to Mr. M. Faletti, Comptroller-General of Indian Hotels Co., Ltd., for interesting details about the Bombay Taj Mahal Hotel. "The idea of inaugurating this big concern was originally conceived by the late Jamsetji Tata," who determined to construct it for the glory of Bombay and "not for financial gain". (I like that bit very much indeed.)

In 1898 the scheme first saw the light and as a Limited Liability Company it is capitalized at nearly half a crore of rupees.

The famous Green's restaurant was absorbed in the Taj Mahal, wiping out another landmark.

Mr. Aldous Huxley, who was in India about 1925, considered Bombay to be architecturally "one of the most appalling cities of either hemisphere."

"The architecture of the Majestic and the Taj Mahal Hotel is not described in the guide book. It is a remissness; they deserve description. The Majestic is more wildly Mahommedan than the most orthodox of Great Moghuls ever dreamed of, and the gigantic Taj combines the style of the South Kensington Museum with that

of an Indian pavilion at an International Exhibition."

What struck Mr. Huxley was the bookstall in the Taj and the number of rows of books dealing with venereal diseases which he felt sure were not bought by doctors but by the public. Had he been longer in India he would have noticed that advertisements of remedies blatantly fill large spaces in the Indian newspapers, so many Indians being perfect martyrs to "loss of manhood" and venereal complaints. Poor devils!

One of the stories about building the hotel is said to be true, but there are others so much like it that well—it may be true. That story is this story. The architect whose plans had been accepted took a holiday to Europe. On his return he found that the building contractors had laid the foundations the wrong way round; the back, instead of the front of the hotel, facing the sea. This, they say, so completely upset him that he went off to meet the Great Architect of the Universe by committing suicide on the spot.

One feels like meeting an old friend when that yarn is told. Fort William was said to have been designed to mount 1000 guns. When the work was completed, the engineer went round three times and to his dismay found there were only 999, so he went home forthwith and blew his brains off.

In Java there are the ruins of the ancient Hindu city of Prambanang. Five miles round, it is preserved as an ancient monument by the Dutch, who, vandals, like the English in India,

destroyed all the beauty before realising its value. Well, the Princes who built the city intended it for his beloved ; when the work was completed he took her to see what he had done. The City of 1000 Idols, all for her!

She went round three times counting the idols to find there were no more than 999. Like others of the unfair sex, she laughed and jeered at his thousand idols. That would be enough to upset anybody. The Prince, very wrath, stopped her giggles by turning her into stone, thereby completing the outfit. Taking that all round the Java yarn is more imaginative, probably as near the truth as the others.



## MADRAS TAVERNS

In one of the early Indian voyager's log book is a reference to what must have been a catamaran off the Madras coast. It may not be quite suitable as an introduction to the subject of this book, but it is better than many.

"This morning at 6 a. m. saw distinctly two black devils playing at singlestick. We watched these infernal imps above an hour, when they were lost in the distance. Surely this doth portend some great tempest." That mariner must have related to the old woman who said she didn't believe in ghosts but she was afraid of them.

The English were not long in Madras before they established taverns. Young newcomers had no other places allotted to them. All appear to have been called after public houses in England and were kept by men who, by virtue of their official position, ought to have kept out of the tavern trade. Madras Records contain portions of a letter written on May 7, 1659 which states: — "There is one thing more that I shall propose to your Worships consideration, which in my opinion seems somewhat Incongruous to the good Government of Soldiers in the Hon'ble Companies Fort, viz., That foure of the cheife officers belonging to the Garrison should be suffered to keepe Punch houses ; for by this means they that should see good order kept amongst the Soldiers doe, for their owne benefit, occasion the greatest disorder."

Apparently "Cheife officers of the Garrison" were not the only delinquents who believed that conscience is a good servant but a bad master. It is useful, occasionally, when warning us: "Don't do that! you'll be caught." Further references are:—

"Also, having had many complaints of the disorderleyness of the souldiers of this Garrison, occasioned through the multiplicity of punch and victualling houses, it is now resolved that no unmarried persons be permitted to keep houses of entertainment, and only such as shall be permitted by the Governor; and that no souldier or any other be permitted to stay at any of the said victualling houses after ringing of the bell for 8 of the Clock of the Evening...

"It is also resolved, for the encouragement of those that are in the Hon'ble Companys service, that none that are out of their service shall keepe a house of Entertainment."

Stories were told of officers, men in their thirties, inducing new arrivals, often mere children to drink and gamble. And if, after winning their money, they dared complain about the ungentlemanly manner in which they had been swindled, well, pistols for two and coffee for the good shot were there for the asking, and no need to ask twice either.

When Dr. Wilmington Walford spent his first night ashore in Madras in the Cadets' Quarters where spirits ran high at the dinner table. Iced claret was plentiful and a sprinkling of seniors on leave added to the party. Bantering, badinage and revelry filled the spacious hall

when one of the newly arrived cadets called a guest, a noted duellist, a liar.

On the beach the following morning the foolish lad was told to apologise. Walford appealed to the Captain to "accept an apology from the hot-headed youth" without success. The boy was shot through the head sinking on his knees as if in prayer.

In August, 1678, all tavern-keepers were directed to appear at the Court of Judicature to take out licenses. The licence authorized the Publican to retail any kind of Wine, Beere, Rum, or other Europe Liquors; Punch, Arrack, or other Indian Liquors; and to keepe a common Victualling house, or house of entertainment. The licences were farmed to John Barker for one year at 205 Pagodas. ("Pagoda"—about eight shillings.)

"The Keepers of Taverns, Punch houses and Arrack houses appeared at Court againe this day, and then there was read to them a paper of proposals and Articles concerning the Renting and farming of Licences for selling of all sorts of Liquors by Retaile: which the greatest part well approved, and some of the poorer sort liked it not so well:—

#### ARTICLES TO BE OBSERVED

"Imprimis. That you hang out a Sign that your house be knowne to be a publicke house of Entertainment. . . .

"6. That you keepe in your house 2 Cotts for Strangers, with cleane Linnen and good accommodation, wholesome Dyett and Liquor;

and you shall not refuse to entertaine such as shall desire the same.

"7. That you shall not sell any kind of Wine at above  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a pagoda the pottle Bottle, English Beer not exceeding 6 fanams the pottle Bottle. Mum not exceeding 8 fanams the quart Bottle, punch not exceeding 5 fanams a Bowle or a quart of Goa or Paryar Arrack, Goa Arrack not exceeding  $2\frac{1}{2}$  fanams the quart, Bengalee Arrack not exceeding 4 fanams the quart. (Fanams about  $2\frac{1}{2}d$ ).

"These orders thus for to be translated into Portugues for all persons concerned to take notice thereof."—(*Vestiges of Old Madras*, Vol. I p 44.

Captain Roger Myddleton, writing from Madras on January 12, 1658-59 said "this is an expensive place and from the drunkenness thereof good Lord deliver us." "If a man have in this place but two or three hundred pounds, he might quickly raise an Estate; but he that is poore, lett him be soe still....." Which shows that inhospitality started early.

While dissipation was rife it does not appear to have been ineradicable for we read in *Vestiges of Old Madras* that—"The Arrac license was farmed in October 1695 to Mrs. Monke (wife of a resident of Madras) and the distillers of Arrac for 2000 Pagodas for one year, and the wine licence to Mr. Hiller for Pags 300. The former complains of no profitt, and the latter of losse which wee beleive probable, and can give no other reason than that the Inhabitants doe not frequent Publick houses as formerly." Excess

broke out, however, in other directions, and in 1700 "the attention of Council was attracted to the prevalence of cockfighting and gaming among the merchants, shopkeepers, by which much of their time was absorbed to the detriment of themselves and the manufacturers of the place. Gambling by such persons was accordingly prohibited, and made punishable by a fine of Pags 25 for each offence proved before the Justices of the Choultry."

While gambling may not have been so rife as it is today with racing and football the stakes were higher. On April 26 1721 the Company wrote from London—"It is of great Concern We hear of the Itch of Gaming hath spread it self over Madrass, that even the Gentlewomen play for great Suffies and that Captain Seaton makes a Trade of it to the stripping of severall Young Men there. We earnestly recommend to you to check as far as you can that mischievous evill. Let Capt. Seaton know if he continues that vicious practice, he shall not stay but be remov'd, and do you take care he be sent off the shore." Seaton refused to be deported but eventually had leave to proceed to Calcutta.

All manner of gaming was forbidden in 1727. "Many persons have been ruin'd as well on board ship as on shore." Women, apparently as bad as the men, no matter if they were married were to be deported. And, "Any civilian informer was to be given a year's standing in the Service."

In 1750 two senior officials were immediately dismissed from the Company's Service but of course little good resulted. A century later,

officers of the 11th Hussars and 16th Lancers, stationed at Cawnpore, used to play whist for Rs. 1000 a rubber.

The British are the greatest gamblers in the world. All their evening papers are run on gambling and it is safe to assert that whatever vices were practised in India, they were not so widespread as in England. Sixty years ago, the Algerian Restaurant in Dean Street, Soho, after trouble with the police had a notice on the walls warning patrons that

ANYONE CAUGHT GAMBLING  
or PLAYING FOR MONEY  
will be kicked into the gutter  
and not picked up again.

PROPRIETOR.

Until follies become ruinous, the world is better with them than it would be without them.

In spite of constant references to the absence of accommodation for strangers, both in Madras and in Bombay, taverns in the olden times sprang up like mushrooms—or shall it be said—like toadstools.

President Pitt, grandfather of the great Earl of Chatham, and owner of the celebrated Pitt diamond, wrote:—

“When the Europeans first settled in India, they were mightily admired by the natives, believing they were as innocent as themselves, but since by their example they have grown very crafty and cautious, and no people better understand their own interest, so that it was easier to effect that in one year which you now shant do

in a century, and the more obliging your management, the more jealous they are of you.”  
—*Bruce's Annals* 1707-8.

Many other writers expressed the same opinion. “The conduct of Europeans generally exercised an evil influence upon the people of India. Most of the English up to the early part of the 18th Century were compulsorily religious, who met at the Throne of Grace twice daily and thrice on Sundays, but were dissolute and dishonest.”

During the first settlement of Madras a “General Table” was established. Officials dined together but later, a separate table was maintained for the Governor and public guests. In 1710 the Directors passed unfavorable comments on the behaviour at the General Table of the junior servants composing the Mess:—

“Wee are Sorry to hear That of late there has not been a Sufficient Decorum kept up among our People, and particularly among the Young Writers and Factors, (and) that there has been Files of Musqueteers Sent for to Keep the Peace at Dinner time. This, wee are sure, casts a very untoward reflection upon the President and Council, and bespeaks them to want Prudence and Conduct. Wee only touch upon it here to caution against the like in future, for how can it be expected that a due obedience should be paid to Government among all the People when it is affronted by such Youngsters?” (3rd Jan. 1710.)

“Several disorders having been committed at the Generall Table, which we find to be partly

occasioned by the absence of those persons in the Service that are of a Superior Standing, and might awe the young ones into better behaviour, we have thought fit to appoint Joseph Smart, Head Searcher, Richard Horden, under Searcher, Thomas Cooke, Receiver, John Legg, Register, and Alexander Bennett, Steward, to take their turns either weekly or monthly, as they shall agree among themselves, to be present at the Table and take care that no indecencys or disorders are committed." (30th June, 1712.)

In the absence of hotel accommodation other than what was afforded by the punch houses, a Committee asked for the formal sanction of the Directors.

"We have sometimes been put to great inconvenience in accommodating Strangers; such, We mean whose Stations or Character entitle them to Publick Notice. If your Honours will permit Us to set apart one of the Confiscated houses for that Purpose (which may be done at a very Moderate Expense) it wou'd not only answer that end, but serve likewise to accommodate your Servants on their first Arrival from England or for Subordinates till they can be otherwise provided for. At present, for want of such a Place, they are obliged take up with what Conveniences are to be met with in a Punch House."—(November 10, 1754)

The first reference to an hotel is found in a Report of the Proceedings of a Committee appointed in 1771 after they had "secured rooms in the Hotel" to accommodate seventeen Company's



servants, "and took the house of the late Mrs. Munro for the use of the officers of the expected Naval Squadron." Early in 1773 the Committee represented that, owing to the enhanced value of house property in the Fort and Black Town, the authorized lodging allowance of Pags. 5 a month to Company's servants was inadequate. Quarters were provided as far as possible, but although two and sometimes three gentlemen were squeezed into one room, the cost worked out to double. The Council accordingly allowed Pags. 10 for house rent and allowed their servants to find their own accommodation. The hired houses were therefore evacuated.

The *Madras Courier* of July 21, 1790 describes in verse what might be expected in a local tavern. It reads as if *Qui Hi* took that as a pattern when he wrote about Bombay haunts.

### THE PUNCH HOUSE

'Forth from the Fort beyond the whirling sands  
Full many a House of recreation starts,  
Whose open door and fairly-lettered sign  
Invite the stranger—enter here and dine.  
The Obsequious landlord welcomes each on  
shore.

In Studied phrase, to thousands used before,  
"Here, bring his honor's Trunk and cott this  
way."

"The weather's cursed hot"—"A smoaking  
day"—

Whilst honest Swamy, master's head Dubash,  
Secures his keys, his Cloaths-bag and his Cash,

And like a prudent, wary, knowing elf,  
 Endeavours none shall rob him—but himself.  
 \* \* \* \*

Mean while mine Host retires to cook a Tiffin  
 With his remark—‘O, Damme, what a griffin!  
 “Here, grill that Fowl; it only died on Sunday,  
 And bring the Porter-bottoms sav’d on  
 Monday”—  
 Throughout the Black-town quick the news  
 is handed,  
 “One Ship arrive, and all the people’s landed  
 \* \* \* \*

Say, should he wish a languid hour to kill—  
 He dashes in a Bandy to—Hog hill,  
 Returns delighted to his ill-made Tea,  
 And crowns the evening—in the Patcheree—  
 In noise and revelry thus pass the days;  
 At length my Landlady her bill displays.  
 \* \* \* \*

“Why, landlord, zounds! too much upon my  
 life.

“I leave these things, your honour, to my wife ;  
 And so d’ye see you’d best not make a noise,  
 For, if you do, I calls them there Sepoys”—  
 Abused, affronted, ridiculed and cheated,.....  
 He flies to tell his Ship-mates how he’s treated.  
 \* \* \* \*

What verse can tell the motley things that meet  
 In this inhospitable dull retreat,  
 Where friend, chicane, and every art combine  
 To aid the Master’s wily keen design?  
 Here Boats wains, Gunners-Mates, and common  
 Sailors  
 Consort with Stewards, Midshipmen and Taylors,

Here self-dubbe'd Captains, Bailliffs, Barbers  
join  
 And drown reflection in adulterate wine.  
 Happy the youth whom some kind friend  
recalls  
 To peace and virtue from th' unhallow'd walls  
 O! kindly act! Rescued perhaps from death,  
 The Youth shall bless you with his latest breath.

It was not the privilege of everybody to be allowed to put up in the better class of taverns. "Keeping of a House of Entertainment for the reception of Strangers and unsettled Persons" was permitted "on condition that He will not entertain any Person under the Degree of a Commission'd Officer, Officers of Ships, or other upon the footing of a Gentlemen." (29th January, 1760.)

Amongst the New Rules drawn up for the Madras Garrison in 1741 it is stated that—"A regulation forbidding soldiers to keep public houses was modified, so as to render such employment permissible whenever European shipping was in the roads. At such times the men were nevertheless to appear for drill as usual. On the departure of the ships their extra-regimental work ceased."

Major David Price who landed in August 1781, "in perfect safety, in Madras roads; just one hundred and sixty-two days from the period at which we quitted Portsmouth."

"Having been given an advance of two months," cadets' pay. "We had taken up our abode at Richard's Hotel, on the outskirts of that

arid plane, which then extended from the glacis of the fort to the suburbs known by the designation of the Black Town; where we were hospitably entertained at a pagoda (8s.) a day; our daily pay as cadets, amounting to no more than one rupee (2s. 6d.) so that it might have been almost truly said, that we spent—"Half-a-crown out of sixpence a day." He goes on:—

"This was however a system of finance too ruinous to be permanent; so I accordingly removed, at the expiration of a few days, and by the recommendation of some friends to a residence more congenial with the constitution of my purse; to a kind of eating-house, in the vicinity of Popham-street, kept by a French-man who had been cook to Sir Robert Harland, one of the Admirals who had recently commanded the squadron in India. I regret that I should have entirely forgotten the name of this kind-hearted foreigner; who, for the short time during which I remained under his roof, behaved to me with an attention that was almost paternal."

7th July, 1790.—William Bell, Removed from Armenian Street To the house lately occupied by Mr. Begg in Due Puy Street, Black Town, Begg leave to inform the Public that he continues the sale of his truly excellent and superior Madeira at 3 Pagodas per Doz. He begs leave at the same time to tender his sincere thanks for the ample support he has continued to receive from his friends and a justly discriminating public."—*Vestiges of Old Madras*. Vol. III.

What we eat is of more importance than what we think and up to this century little was known



Fine biscuit, Bags	30
Butter, Firkins	5
Cheese	6
Flour, Casks	3
Hams	15
Fine rice, Bags	12
Sugar-candy, Tubs	10
Tea, Chest	1
Tongues, Casks	5

Salt-fish, curry-stuff, pease, spices, • lime juice, Onions etc. etc. cabin furniture, table linen and towels, glassware, China etc. etc., Standing and swinging cott with bedding and curtains complete. A couch. Also a great number of small articles of provisions, care having been taken that nothing material should be omitted."

(Signed) Wm. Sydenham, *Town Major*.

Fort St. George  
9th October 1783

## TAVERNS

8th September, 1791—THE MASTER of that well known and much frequented House, The Griffin, on the Great Western Road, 3 returns grateful thanks to his friends and the Public for that partial attention which he has hitherto experienced from them, and assures them that it shall be his earnest and constant endeavour by his future conduct, to merit a continuance of their favour. He has the pleasure to inform them he has now laid in a choice assortment of Wines and other Liquors of the first quality, and

in particular Claret of that much esteemed vintage of 1759. Also some of Thrale's best old October in the Cask, which he can answer for as having been in this Country upwards of twelve years; with Cheese and Hams, carefully preserved in Tom Lincoln's Godown since the year 1785. There is excellent Stabling for Horses and Carriages with careful drivers.

N. B.—The House is pleasantly situated with Pumlies in the neighbourhood, and Monboddos Academy for youth is near at hand."

"12th January, 1792.—FORT TAVERN Court House Street.

"John Card begs leave to acquaint his friends and the public in general, that he is removed from the London tavern in Black Town to the Tavern in Fort St. George, and he humbly solicits the continuance of that encouragement he has hitherto experienced.

"N. B.—Soups every morning and dinners dress'd on the shortest Notice—and the very best Wine."

"COFFEE HOUSE." James Fell begs leave to acquaint the Public that the Coffee Room in the Madras Exchange will be opened on Monday the 16th instant, and as he wishes to the utmost of his power to give general satisfaction he proposes keeping the Room as much as possible on the same plan as that of New-Lloyd's in London by opening a sett of Books to register all Arrivals and Departures to and from all the Ports of India and first intelligence of Shipping to and from Europe. He also means to take in all the News-

Papers of this Country and Europe for the use of the Coffee-Room, where a Clerk will attend for the purpose of receiving and taking care of Papers and Letters belonging to Gentlemen who may do him the Honor to frequent the room.....”

Nobody appears to have had a good word for the taverns which were the resort of bad hats out for anything from pitch-and-toss to murder. Like the doctors of those days, tavern keepers suffered from a precocious hardening of heart which, if it did not kill them, was often fatal to others. Yet it appears that neither gave so much trouble to Government as the parsons who, more than once, were said to give more than all the other people put together.

. There were swarms of outcast ruffians (in 1792, 4000 English were in Canton) who hocussed and robbed strangers or one another, drunk or asleep and found other attractions in kind when they could afford to pay for them. As Byron put it:—

“What men call gallantry and the gods call  
adultery  
Is much more common where the climate is  
sultry.”

Drunkenness was general but there were excuses. Whether more died from the bottle of the spoon cannot be estimated, but most men did their best to kill themselves and were fairly successful at that. Today they do the same thing in another way, by taking too much exercise. Ovington remarked that an Englishwoman could be sure of a succession of wealthy and choleric



husbands, but from most accounts, women ate and drank as much as the men. They do today. The grossest ignorance prevailed in regard to sanitation. Doctors, who took life lightly possessed sufficient ignorance to kill or make patients worse were they unfortunate enough to be compelled to go to them for treatment.

On the 15th June, 1796, Tavern and Punch House Licenses were granted for that year to a number of people among them being the names of three women. "Several of these tavern keepers became landed proprietors, and indeed, the names of three are still commemorated in Madras, viz., John Standiver Sherman in *Sherman's Road*, Vepery ; Lynn Pereira in *Lynn Pereira Street*, San Thome; and Francis D'Silva in *De Silva's Road*, Luz." One of the licensees, Sherman, had lately rebuilt his premises, which were situated at the south end of Stringer Street, and had the misfortune to break some of the city's byelaws.

"His workmen were stopped in May by authority, and he represents that, if he is not permitted to build an upper story, he will be put to great loss, as the design and business for which the house was intended to be erected (being that of a Tavern and Hotel) absolutely requires an upper story for Bed rooms and other conveniences." The Chief Engineer reported that the ground given up was an encroachment on Stringer Street by a former lessee. By increasing the height of his house from 19 to 26 feet Sherman is violating a regulation under which no person has a right to build an upper story within

one hundred yards of the boundary of the Esplanade. Government directed, Sheriman, as they call him, to curb his ambitious ideas."

Sherman more than likely gave his name to Sherman's Gardens, Nungumbaukum. He died in 1841, so must have spent quite fifty years in India.

"General Harris had in 1798 allowed one John Burden to open a tavern in the Fort, but the proprietors closed the house within a year for want of capital. In 1800 he applied for a renewal of sanction, and the Justices supported his request. Government passed the following orders:—"Agreed to Authorize the Justices to grant a License for the Tavern recommended by them for a period of one year, as a temporary convenience to the public; but as such an institution is inconsistent with the principles on which it is intended to regulate the Fort, Agreed also to desire that the license may not be renewed at the expiration of that time."—*Vestiges of Old Madras*. Vol. II. p. 503.

Towards the end of the 18th Century three of the principal public houses in Madras received the following recommendation;—

*The Justices to Lord Mornington and Council.*

"We Recommend that the Taverns on the Esplanade called the Navy Tavern, the King's Arms, and the old London Tavern be permitted to be kept open until 12 at night. The other Taverns' and Punch Houses will be Shut at 9 at night.

"Although the Sale of Cordials is not likely to

produce the Effects of Ebriety among the lower Classes of the People, yet as the Arrack Farmer, under the Head of *all Spirituous Liquors*, claims the exclusive privilege of Selling Cordials, we have been obliged to put the Additional Tax upon these Liquors, as well as upon Jamaica Rum, Gin, Brandy, &c." (24th May 1799).

Colonel Love's *Vestiges of Old Madras* stops short at the year 1800 and information about taverns during the 19th Century is difficult to obtain. Conditions probably continued the same until the advent of cheaper Home passages when a demand for improvement set in. Judging by Calcutta, life ran along in 1890 as it did in 1820 and it is doubtful if Madras changed much more than half a brick a year.

Public gatherings of all descriptions were held in the Pubic Rooms, variously called the Assembly Rooms, and the Pantheon. The date when the building was established has not been precisely determined, but it must have been before December 1789 when Hugh Boyd addressed Government regarding the exclusion of Sir Paul and Lady Jodrell from the "Public Room."

Lord Cornwallis was publicly entertained on October 10, 1793, and shortly after that the house and grounds were acquired by a committee of gentlemen who regulated the amusements which were pursued in the Settlement. Lord Clive gave balls and suppers at the Pantheon in 1802. Subscription dances and dramatic performances were held there while it was also the centre for the cultivation of silk worm.

Early in March 1805 "a grand dinner was given at the Pantheon by the Officers of His Majesty's and the Hon'ble Company's Services at the Presidency, to Major General the Hon'ble Sir Arthur Wellesley, K.B."

After the Battle of Assaye, Wellesley, (later the Duke of Wellington) sailed round India on a "felicitations" trip. He was entertained in Calcutta and Bombay where compliments were laid on as thick as the strongest could bear. It must be admitted that Wellesley was a great man. He did not consider official life ought to fit in between games; polo, a bagful of toys carried round golf links, and tennis didn't trouble him. On his journey to India he made up his mind to be a soldier, and although fond of playing the violin, he threw the instrument overboard in case it might affect the serious study of his profession. It is a pity that more of our soldiers have not followed his example. Games, the cinema, and those sentimentalists whose minds are debased by a love of adulation have, by taking men's mind off actualities, tried most to bring about the downfall of the British Empire. Prosperity and idleness breed those cranks of whom we have far too many. After Waterloo the military mind sank down to bow-and-arrow mentality, unable to grasp the power science had placed in their hands, nor to study the successful methods of fighting in the 18th Century.

But to return to the Pantheon. 300 attended the dinner which was conducted with the greatest order and regularity by the judicious manner in which the Stewards were seated, their chairs being

distinguished by small red flags, and that of the President of the Union.

There were 8 toasts after which the band played a tune. Then a gentleman (name not given) sang a song of five verses of his own composition "Which was received with the greatest enthusiasm, and loudly encored from every part of the room." (We know those songs composed for the occasion heard "on one consecutive time only" but memory recalls the story of the musical padre who announced from the pulpit—"We will now all sing to the praise and glory of God, hymn 1001 to a tune composed by myself.")

After that there were several other toasts "with their appropriate tunes," but the journalist was already under the weather, for he admits "the whole of which we could not collect." They apparently drank the downfall of their enemies until they couldn't stand themselves. It must have been a great show.

They revelled in eulogy in those days. Lord Gough, Commander-in-Chief, on Lord Hardinge's retirement in 1846, in a parting speech observed.—"The noble Lord had done much for the army ; both for the living and the dead—he had made both more comfortable."

Writing of his arrival at Madras on July 15, 1817, a traveller and his companion "repaired to the Madras Tavern kept by a half-caste woman, but superintended by an Englishman named Taylor, who has since married the Landlady. It is a spacious building—the attendance is good and the provisions of the best sort."

The *Chit-chat Papers* which appeared origi-

nally in the *Madras Athenaeum and Daily News* between January 1 and May 31, 1873 had a brand of humour which forces one to feel what shocking bounders our people were at that time. To play painful practical jokes on servants, male and female, when they were sleeping and glory in it, were claimed to have been so popular an item in the press that they were subsequently published in book form makes one long to kick those who considered themselves to be almost gentlemen. Perhaps it means no more than humour having its date as well as its geography.

Books like the *Chit-chat Papers* show how social exaltation can be as closely allied to cadishness as pigs are to pork, and less wholesome. Thank God that mentality has died out completely and servants all over the country are now decently treated. A curious letter appeared which is worth notice because that too, shows how the people themselves have changed.

"Sir, A day or two ago our old butcher whom I have been often blowing up because of the meat he has persisted in sending us, came to my door leading a fine large white cow. Lines in red chalk were drawn all over the animal's body; and here and there, in spaces marked by the red lines, were written in black chalks, the names of several of our station folk. The butcher then asked me, after I had seen all this with considerable surprise "what piece of beef you please take, ma'am?—Plenty too much nice fine cuts still left, Mem Sahib!" Yes it was true! No wonder I was horrified. The butcher had brought round the animal he was about to kill to enable us to

choose our own joints from the yet living creature! What comment to this is needed?"

Sincerely yours

Daisy Darkeyes.,

Until 1892 the Capital of the "Benighted Presidency" was as backward as other parts of India when Aumaragura, owner of the Elphinstone, took over the Connemara, now owned by the celebrated firm of Spencer & Co., Limited.

At one time the building had been the residence of the Commander-in-Chief of the Madras Army. It was of the usual Madras design in favour a century and more ago, with lofty rooms, thick walls, spacious corridors and hall, with the best bedrooms designed to keep out heat and light, making darkness almost visible.

It was not until 1933 that the main building was demolished and a new Connemara commenced. That was completed in 1937; the 'lay-out' of kitchens and dining rooms is said to be the most perfect in India.

Travellers say that the Connemara is the best hotel in India which is what should be expected from a firm like Spencer & Co., with their experience in the catering trade and the extent of their business. A firm employing some 30,000 men, in the most heavily taxed industry in the country must be a tower of financial strength to Government. Someone, full of praise, said that, for Madras, the Connemara is like the wedding present—far too good.

## CALCUTTA TAVERNS

Various stories are current about the origin of the word Calcutta—a city whose site was said to have been chosen by a frog, a Dutchman, or an alligator, and “whose lands are low-lying lands and whose people are low-lying people”. Since this war started it is most certainly doubtful if they are bigger liars than those in the West who, suffering from chronic inflammation of the wish-bone, exaggerate details of incidents that never occurred. The first casualty in War is Truth.

One story is that Calcutta is a corruption or an adaptation of Kalighat. The other, more popular because it is absurd, is about a sailor who asked a Bengali “What place is this?” As the man did not understand English the sailor, in the nautical style of the day punched his head. Much surprised, there was a shout of “Kya karenge?” which satisfied the seaman who replied “Kalcutta? Then why didn’t you say that before?”

Long before the English came to India there was a *mouza* called Calcutta. In 1698 “thanks to the friendly assistance of Surhand, an Armenian, English settlers on the river Hooghly were permitted to purchase for Rs. 1,300 the right to rent the *mouzas* of Calcutta, Sutanati, and Govindpur. And to make this purchase the English had to pay Prince Farrackshah, a gratification of Rs. 16,000.

Ten years before then we read “Soe myself accompanied with Captain Haddock and the



120 soldiers we carried from hence, and about the 20th September (1688) arrived at Calcutta."

Orme, the historian, and Captain Hamilton corroborate; other authorities support; and to Job Charnock is given the credit for selecting the site of a Settlement which has now become one of the most important cities in the world.

It is curious that Job Charnock, the founder of Calcutta appears to have been one of the first interested in taverns in Calcutta. It is said that he "gained an unenviable reputation on the score of the punch house and billiard table kept by Hill, the Secretary and Captain of the soldiers, to whom Charnock entrusted wide powers of indiscretion," Charles Raikes, in *The Englishman in India* states that a sergeant was kept as a bully and the officer in charge "was allowed to send in false returns in aid of the tavern business."

Charnock came to India in 1655. "On October 25, 1667, the Company, to show their appreciation of his services, increased his pay to £40 per annum, and in 1676 he was granted an annual gratuity of £20." Towards the end of his days he appears to have degenerated. Professor C. R. Wilson was of opinion that "Charnock possessed the rare virtue of disinterested honesty—a virtue which has raised up against him scores of secret enemies. Coarse and sinful he may have been, but I prefer to remember only his resolute determination, his clear-sighted wisdom, and his honest self-devotion."

Captain Hill, with whom Charnock was in partnership was one who sharked all he could, old or young, particularly the young in accord.

ance with the ethics of the day for no mercy or consideration was shown to youngsters who were expected to look after themselves as if they were men. Those who criticised or complained in any company had to look out for squalls, and in Hill's haunt, they were either beaten-up by the sergeant, or, if their social position entitled them to that consideration, honored by being challenged to fight a duel with the proprietor. Hill was unpopular not so much on account of his tavern but because he had "let his wife turn Papist without control."

Job Charnock died on January 10, 1692 or 1693. When he came to India nearly thirty-seven years before his death, dacoity in its most brutal form prevailed and the poverty-stricken Akhōrs used to eat what remained of the dead bodies after cremation at the burning ghats. Like all great men various stories are told about him, the most popular being his rescue of an Indian widow when she was about to be burned with her dead husband ; his affection for her led him to sacrifice a rooster on her grave on the anniversary of her death. As she was a Hindu it is a thousand to one that she was cremated according to Hindu rites, but it is characteristic of human nature that the more incredible such fables are, the firmer they grip the imagination. It is possible that the Hindu-widow story is true ; there may have been several of them, and, on £40 a year it is probable that he did try to make a bit out of the tavern.

The Rev. J. Long, in *Selections from Records of the Government of India*, refers to "Outrages

on Seamen and to the Apollo Tavern in Lall Bazaar, where the President and Governor of Fort William held a Consultation on December 12th, 1748."

One can picture how these worthies and unworthies passed their days, and learn how the old hands jeered at the footling life led by those younger than themselves compared with the luxury of years gone by.

In a letter from *An Old Country Captain* in the *India Gazette* of February 24, 1781, he writes:—"I am an old stager in this Country, having arrived in Calcutta in the year 1736 ..... Those were the days, when Gentlemen studied *Ease* instead of fashions; even when the Hon. Members of the Council met in Banyan Shirts, Long Drawers," (q. v.) (which covered the feet as a precaution against mosquitoes) "and Conjee caps; with a case bottle of good old Arrack, and a Gouglet of Water placed on the Table, which the Secretary (a Skilful Hand) frequently converted into Punch....." He was one of many who believe that the more the world improves the worse it gets.

• "...each veteran rule he prized

And all improvement heartily despised."

In 1785 J. Tresham established a tavern in Meredith's Lane, a dirty gully off Bentinck Street, next door to Meredith's Stables. This thoroughfare (now swept away by the Improvement Trust) was about fourteen feet wide; as late as the 1880's one loathed the odour of the drains which were ostentatiously filthy, with a peculiar stink, which turned you giddy particularly if prickly

heat caught you between the shoulder blades. "Tresham's Tavern was a place where hosts of flies filled the rooms and never seemed to have left them except to repair now and then to adjoining muckheaps for a change of air."

An unfortunate, writing home from that hostelry said it was the place where

".....while the butter's melting,  
The flies eat up the cake."

That brings back to memory an experience of a missionary who spent many years in China. He had tried to teach people there the danger appertaining to flies. To illustrate his argument he prepared lantern slides showing flies settling on ordure and then on to the Chinaman's food. His audience was interested but pointed out that these English flies, two feet long, were surely dangerous, but theirs, no bigger than a finger nail, were far too small to do any harm.

Tresham moved from Meredith Lane and advertised as follows:—

#### J. TRESHAM

"Begs leave to acquaint the Ladies and Gentlemen of the Settlement that he has taken a house in the Cosseetolah Bazar,.....where he carries on his business in all its branches. Ladies and Gentlemen may be furnished with Dinners, Suppers, or Cold Collation, on the shortest notice. Biscuits of all kinds, tarts and tartlets fresh every day.

"He also prepares the following articles for Sea, or to take Up-country, which he will warrant for six months:—viz. Potted Beef, Veal,

Mutton, Ducks, Geese and Pigeons, Collard Beef, Mutton, Pork, and small Pigs, Fish Coreach, Mince Meat, Plumb Cakes, Jams and Marmalades of all kinds, preserved butter, eggs and milk, milk-punch, etc. etc.

"Ladies and Gentlemen who please to honour him with their custom may depend on having them duly attended to. Turtles dressed at home and abroad."

The Arabs say—"Mortal, if thou wouldst be happy, change thy home often ; for the sweetness of life is variety, and the morrow is not mine or thine."

One would think the "Inhabitants of the Settlement," as Calcutta people then styled themselves, adopted that as their guiding policy. Old-time taverns constantly changed hands. Advertisements ran, "To let for six months or even for one year" which speaks for itself. But then, as now, men didn't die: they killed themselves. The difference being that in the good old days they didn't take so long about it.

A modern poet remonstrating with one of those thirsty souls who, "from drinking of soft water, he took to drinking hard" was met with—

"My candle burns at both ends?

It will not last the night ?

But ah, my foes, and oh, my friends—

It gives a lovely light."

"Well, everything a man has in this world, he pays for ; it's worth it—sometimes.

Tavern keepers had a poor look out if their customers did not pay their bills.

In 1671-72 "It is likewise ordered and declared hereby that no Victualler, Punch House, or other House of Entertainment shall be permitted to make stoppages at the pay day of their wages."

Mr. William Parkes wrote on June 21, 1762 "acquainting the Board that he had purchased a garden house which he intended for the resort of the gentry of Calcutta, and asking for a license.

"This was granted on condition that it was not to be open in the morning as the Board were afraid that it would be the means of keeping people from doing their duty." Long's *Selections from the Unpublished Records of the Government of India* Vol. I, No. 579.

"Garden Houses" seem to have been of the nature of rural taverns, a "snare and a delusion to the young writer in the Company's service."

A reference to Calcutta inns and taverns is found in the 1688 records when Mrs. Francis, "wife of the late Lieutenant Francis killed at Hooghly by the Moors made it her petition that she might keep a punch house for her maintenance."

It is curious how few complaints are to be found in the records about the heat of the climate, although it must often have been as hot as the sun could make or bake it. One reference is interesting. Surgeon Ives, writing on Monday, August the 15th 1737, states:—This was the most sultry day I ever experienced in India; not a breath of air was there for many hours; both man and the very fowls of the air so sensibly felt it, that some of each species fell down dead."

But there were many about prickly heat. Lord Minto writing on June 29, 1807, mentioned—"One thing I have forgotten to tell you of—the prickly heat. To give you some notion of its intensity, the placid Lord William (Bentinck) has been found sprawling on a table on his back; and Sir Henry Gwillin, one of the Madras Judges, who is a Welshman, and a fiery Briton in all senses, was discovered by a visitor rolling on his own floor, roaring like a baited bull." "

At one time it was called the "Red Dog". Another name for it was "Fiery Pimples." Madrassis used a paste of sandalwood to alleviate it.

Mosquitoes appear to have been the worst of the pests; they are today. I remember being 'neaped' between Rangoon and Bassein in what was known as Mosquito Creek. The steamer had failed to get through on top of high water on account of time lost through a collision with a rice boat. Two soldiers jumped overboard, driven mad by mosquitoes. One was drowned.

I thought I knew something about mosquitoes but I found worse ones in Canada which were larger than any seen in Assam or Burma while they attacked when one walked about which those in Eastern places do not. The driver of a charabanc had, as near as I could count, about fifty on the back of his neck. He seemed to pay no more heed than if they had been freckles.

With the Calcutta Maidan a swamp, the jungle up to Chowringhee, and the stagnant water in the moat of Fort William the sufferings of newcomers from the attacks of insects must

have been unendurable. A soldier complained: "What with the hum of the mosquito above, and the bug in the bed below, I am regularly hum-bugged out of my night's rest."

It was the general custom "after dinner the company sit round in the middle of the room, talk in whispers and scratch their mosquito bites."

A new arrival in this "gasping Empire" wrote to the *Bengal Gazette* on August 12, 1780:—

"Where Music (different from the Notes  
That warble from Italian Throats)  
With ceaseless din assails—  
Where crows by Day, and Frog by night,  
Incessant foes of calm delight

Croak their discordant Lays.

"Where insects settle on your meat,  
Where Scorpions crawl beneath your feet  
And deadly snakes infest  
Mosquitoes ceaseless teasing sound  
And Jackals direful howls confound  
Destroy your balmy rest."

Insects were not the only pests. "At the Inn I was tormented to death by the impertinent, persevering of the black people, for every one is a beggar, as long as you are reckoned a griffin or a newcomer."—*Life of Leyden*, 1808.

There is no doubt though about mosquitoes. They abounded and were a perfect pest. "Nobody can guess what these animals are till they have lived among them" wrote Emily Eden in March 1836, a few days after her brother, Lord Auckland, had been sworn in as Governor-General. "Many people have been laid up for many weeks by their bites on their first arrival."



A week later there is another entry in her diary: "Sir Charles Metcalfe, who has been here for thirty years, says they bite him now, as much as they did the first day, and many people seemed to be confined for months after they first arrive, from the inflammation of the bites."

Sir Charles D'Oyly says:—"The mosquitoes may be heard towards sunset swarming into the homes of Europeans in full chorus, humming as loud as a stocking weaver's loom. The natives rarely cook their victuals before that time, when the smoke drives away the mosquitoes: then, getting on the wing, they throng towards the quarter occupied by Europeans principally." One writer complained that "not even pasteboard leggings kept them off."

At all times therefore the beds were furnished with curtains made of "kabbradool, which is a kind of gauze manufactured from the refuse of raw silk, commonly dyed a light green." Sometimes a very small frame punkah would be suspended within the bed curtains and would be moved by means of a cord passing through them into another room. Sir Charles D'Oyly "derived such pleasure and benefit" from this construction, that he wonders "the plan did not become general."

One striking feature of Calcutta up to the 1890's was the "adjutant" a species of bird so called from its resemblance to a human figure in a stiff dress pacing slowly on a parade ground.

Baber (*cira* 1530) says: "One of these (fowls) is the *ding*, which is a large bird. Each of its wings is the length of a man; on its head and

neck there is no hair. Something like a bag hangs from its neck ; its back is black, its breast white ; it frequently visits Kabul. One year they caught and brought me a *ding* which became very tame. The flesh which they throw it, it never failed to catch in its beak, and swallowed without ceremony. On one occasion it swallowed a shoe well shod with iron ; on another occasion it swallowed a good-sized fowl right down with its wings and feathers."

Ives, writing in 1754 said he mistook them for Indians naked. "The wings extended 14 feet 10 inches.....In the craw was a land tortoise 10 inches long ; and a large black male cat was found entire in its stomach."

Major Bevan was impressed by the adjutants when he came to Calcutta in 1808. "So stately and grave, they are seen reposing quietly on the flat roof and surrounding balustrades of Government House like fixed ornamental figures."

Hindus were said to believe that the bodies of adjutants are possessed by the souls of Brahmins ; shooting them therefore is considered an act of unpardonable wickedness. "Every bird saving the adjutant of argeela retires to some shady spot in the daytime."

"Around the half-burned and expiring members of the burning ghats it stalks with gaunt, bony limbs, the protected scavenger of the City of Palaces, its huge bill begrimed with exploring the ashes of the unconsumed dead."

Dr. Buchanan's *Christian Researches* complain that "I have beheld the dead bodies of

natives, not yet cold, who had expired under the trees in the vicinity of Calcutta, mangled and torn by adjutants, while crowds of Hindus were passing to bathe in the Ganges ; and when the corpses were pointed out to their countrymen, the cold answer was—"Hum Jaunta ne, sahib,"—(I know him not.)

There used to be a story about one who perched on top of the Ochterlony Monument. Some one gave him a cake of soap on which he retired to his sunny roost to blow out soap bubbles for a week.

"Mr. Robert Rishton begs leave to acquaint the Gentlemen of the Settlement, that at the desire of his Friends, he has opened a tavern in the Radha Bazaar, next to Mr. Fivey's Europe Shop, where he hopes for the further continuance of their favours. He also embraces this Opportunity of expressing his thanks to the Public in general, for the favours and countenances he has met with and to assure them that it will be his principal study to give satisfaction to those who may be pleased to continue their favours.

N. B. Oysters every Week. February 10th, 1781.

On the same page of *Hicky's Bengal Gazette*, Robert Harvey advertised, "the best Country Rum at one rupee eight annas per gallon wholesale, and one rupee ten annas, retail."

A correspondent, writing on November 25, 1780, apparently supported the assertion that an hour in the law courts is better than a thousand years ; after making serious accusations about the scoundrelism of the Judge, he added—"I

could wait no longer so retired to Nicholl's tavern to a Fowl and Oysters." Let us hope the oysters were better for him than the Judge, although Calcutta was supposed to have the best judges money could buy.

Francis Le Gallais had a tavern near the Harmonic where, in 1775, Richard Barwell "required his friends to join him every fortnight," and at one of his gatherings G. F. Grand was engaged on the night Philip Francis invaded his household. (The great fuss made over that bit of scandal testifies to the domestic morality of the times. According to a man who afterwards travelled to England with Grand, that "outraged" husband was a poisonous snob, undeserving of sympathy. His wife did amazingly well for herself after the divorce in which she was entirely blameless.) Speaking generally, faint heart never got into the Divorce Court. During the notable trial of Nanda Kumar, Le Gallais provided for the lawyers "and those whom they should invite" "eight dinners and nine suppers for 15 persons each" for which he charged Rs. 629. (*Bengal Past and Present* Vol. 14. p. 216.)

As that appears to work out to about Rs. 2/4 per head, the charge was about the same as it might be today.

One of the earliest references to Le Gallais is in the note books of Mr. Justice Hyde.

"1776, March 26. *Le Gallais vs. Mohun Persaud*. An action to recover from Mohun Persaud, Le Gallais the Cook's bills for the dinners and other entertainments provided by his orders for the Council, Attorneys and those they

should invite, during the trial of Nuncomar. Rs. 629, for eight dinners and nine suppers for 16 persons each."

The Second Lodge of Bengal, now Lodge *Industry and Perseverance*, No. 109 E.C. "had installed itself at Brother Le Gallais' on the 9th July 1778 and their host "attending the Lodge for the first time was raised by the R. W."—i.e. obligated. At this meeting a formal resolution was passed:—"The Court House being uninhabitable, agreed that in future the Lodge be held at Brother Le Gallais's the second Friday in every month and that a supper be ordered at such times." The Lodge continued to meet at Le Gallais' until August 6th 1780 after which date W. Bro. H. G. Honycomb held the meetings at his own house. One of the items was Rs. 31/12. for saltpetre for cooling the wines.

In a letter "Sophia Goldborne" relates that—"I was also shewn, *en passant*, a tavern called the London Hotel where entertainments are furnished at the *moderate* price of a gold mohur a head exclusive of the dessert and wines—two very expensive articles indeed! for claret, notwithstanding its free consumption, is in private families five rupees (twelve and sixpence) a bottle.

"At the coffee house your single dish of coffee costs you a rupee (half-a-crown) ; which half-crown, however, franks you to the perusal of the English newspapers, which are regularly arranged on a file, as in London ; together with the *Calcutta Advertiser*, the *Calcutta Chronicle*, etc. etc.—and, for the honour of Calcutta, be it

recorded, that the two last-named publications *are*, what the English prints formerly *were*, moral, amusing, and intelligent. I wish, Arabella, you could turn this hint to profit ; but much fear the frenzy of politics and the fever of scandal are confirmed diseases, and, as such, incurable."

Which seems to show that Sophia had no great admiration for the mud bath of politics nor did she have great respect for newspapers. What would she say about that modern journalism which is devoted to the art of keeping intelligence at a low level, and journalists who knowing nothing about what happened a month ago for ever pray—"Give us this day our daily stunt and forgive us our stunt of yesterday's?"

Under the heading "Racing News" the *Calcutta Gazette* of January 2, 1784, stated that "After the race each morning, (there was apparently but one a day) a public breakfast was given in tents on the course at which a company of over 150 sat down."....."After breakfast, the company adjourned to an adjoining tent of very capacious dimensions, handsomely fitted up and boarded for the purpose of dancing. Country dances commenced in two sets and were kept up with the utmost gaiety till two in the afternoon."

The earliest race-course in Calcutta was situated at the end of Garden Reach, or what was afterwards in Akra Farm. But there was another on the Maidan which was not laid out until 1819. The one at Akra, according to Sophia Goldborne was three miles in circuit, and "I imagine, is found a laborious heat in this country, for once round is all that is attempted."

She states "the horses that run for a subscription-plate as in England, are fed, they inform me, with mēal, as you English feed pigeons." "English jockies are well rewarded if they visit Calcutta." Considering that they may have wasted a year in going to and fro they had to be.

In a letter dated October 21, 1784, a correspondent recommended the establishment of a Ranelagh, or Vauxhall, and a coffee-house modelled after the manner of the Chapter Coffee-house in London. He said he had observed with delight the rapid progress made in all polite and refined entertainments, and declared that "Calcutta, in the elegance of its amusements, and the fashionable style in which they are carried on, will shortly vie with most of the cities, even in Europe."

The scheme was unsuccessful. During the following year, (1785) the proprietors of the London Tavern tried an indoor Vauxhall, and laid out their 'large and extensive room' in a country style, with 'several rural walks diversified, they trust, with taste and fancy,' 'with several alcoves conveniently interspersed in them, where there will always be ready prepared the best cold collation.' A band of music was to attend for the entertainment of the company. Further, to attract the nobs and snobs, "the accommodations will be so arranged that a variety of parties may enjoy themselves without mixing with others, or being subject to the intrusion usual at public places or amusement."

Le Gallais catered for the big dinners of the times. On New Year's Day of 1789, "a respect-

able and numerous company dined with His Lordship at the Old Court House...after a repast on turtle, turkies, and other good 'things, drank the twenty-four loyal toasts in the usual manner."

The "usual manner" often meant an accompaniment by the Grenadiers of the European regiment in Fort William, who fired volleys of blank cartridge out of the windows after each toast.

Le Gallais appears to have met with occasional bad luck, for, after one of his dinners, a correspondent wrote, "We cannot say anything in favour of the supper, but unwilling to say anything against it, as the *traiteur*, Mr. Le Gallais, has in general deserved praise, and a single failure may have been accidental."

And when the difficulties that had to be overcome are appreciated it is a wonder complaints were not more general.

The poet-prophet Omar Khayam said, 800 years ago:—"In the four parts of the earth are many that are able to write learned books, many that are able to lead armies, and many also that are able to govern kingdoms and empires: but few there are that can keep hotel."

An advertisement in the *Calcutta Gazette* of February 26, 1788, was to the effect that Le Gallais "proposes to open the rooms of the Old Court House at 9 o'clock in the evening in Thursday, the 5th March, for a Fancy Ball." He must have been comparatively an old resident for he had been in the tavern business sixteen years when he died at the age of 54 on August



22nd, 1791. His widow carried on the catering after his death. St. Andrew's Day Dinner, probably the first held in Calcutta, took place in his tavern in 1792.

During that year a meeting was held there with the object of raising subscriptions for the "erection of a public building for the general accommodation of the Settlement" (That eventually led to a lottery for building the Town Hall.)

That they often did themselves well can be gathered from Hicky's *Bengal Gazette* of Saturday, November 10, 1781.

### MR. HICKY,

*"By inserting the following Description, of a Ball and Supper given at Chandernagore, you will oblige a Correspondent.*

LAST Monday Evening 5 November was Given by Capt. Joseph Channing, in commemoration of his Anniversary, a very elegant Ball and Supper to the Ladies and Gentlemen at Chandernagore.

"The Ball opened with Sam. Beachcroft Esq: and the Countess of Nuchollie dancing the first Minuet, which was followed respectively by the different illustrious Personages according to Precedency, the Minutes were 'succeeded.. by Cotillons, Country Dances, &c. and kept up 'til near 11 o'clock when the President announced to the Brilliant Assembly that Supper was upon the Table, and in the most sensible and polite manner entreated the Gentlemen to hand the Ladies. Some seconds after the Company had been seated,

it was observable the profound silence that prevailed, occasioned by the Attention, of the House being drawn with Admiration, to the Beautiful and Pastoral display of various figures, Composed of Confectionery, exhibiting at various parts of the Table, groves, woodbines, Alcoves, and a variety of other Rural scenes, which seemed to remind one of something of the Al Fresco Style. The Supper and wines were Super-excellent, and elegantly served up." *Argus*.

A belief that the English could do as they liked with the people of the country does not appear to be based on fact. There were, of course, individual cases of tyranny ; it was a rough world, but where the arm of the law could reach, the East India Company punished with severity those convicted of such offences.

One must remember that Orientals do not foster sympathy, or they do not allow it to spread beyond the family. Vivekananda, an Indian writer stated that "No society puts its foot on the neck of the wretched so mercilessly as that of India."

The stoic Seneca, tells us that only weak eyes weep over the troubles of others and one can see anywhere in India how lunatics, lepers, cripples and the sick are scandalously neglected. "Pity is alien to the heart of Hindustan." Sufferers are looked upon as working out sentences passed on them for sins committed during a former existence, so why bother ?

Our own people have little to brag about when the past is raked up ; as someone pointed out, they revelled in watching prize fights, and

would pay large sums to see a public execution but pretended to shudder at the mention of bull fights. That brings to mind the story of the Spanish Mayor who enthusiastically welcomed the suggestion to start a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and offered to organise a bull fight to raise the necessary funds.

One or two incidents are worth relating. In March 1763 Marshall Johnson had been charged with assaulting his servant, and failed to appear when called upon. He and the man who stood bail were fined £400 and died a lot of "rotting in a loathsome jail" before they go out.

August 6, 1795. "On Friday last a general Gaol Delivery was made when sentence of death was passed on six criminals (five Europeans and one Bengali) convicted of burglary.....they are to be executed on Monday next, and we understand for the sake of example, they will be hung in the (China) bazar near the house where the burglary was committed." As the value of the stolen goods worked out to no more than Rs. 26 each, they certainly got all they deserved.

In 1797 "a man, his wife and two sons, after serving a sentence of transportation in Botany Bay, arrived in Calcutta and set up a Punch House." They were convicted for crimping and Shanghaiing sailors. The whole family was deported.

William and Ann Smith kept a disorderly Punch House in 1799. On being ordered to leave the country, Smith barricaded himself in his house and shot a sepoy, who died. In January 1800 he was executed in accordance

with the custom of the times, outside the house where the crime was committed.

In 1808 a Captain-Lieutenant (Senior Subaltern commanding the Colonel's company) and a Lieutenant were tried by a General Court Martial for having ordered a poor female camp follower to be shaved and drummed out of bounds on a charge of scandal. They were convicted of misconduct and ordered to be placed on the Military Pension List.

There is the classic story of Sir Charles Napier who, when Commander-in-Chief, in confirming a Court Martial sentence of death passed on a soldier for killing a 'native' expressed the opinion that "I consider the sentence inadequate." That was in 1840.

Sir Charles Napier was a 'character.' He was always 'staggering' Anglo-Indian Society particularly in the way of dress. He put on anything, anyhow, and cared for nobody. But when he began to treat severely those officers who were reported to him for owing money, amazement knew no bounds. His comments on cases show that for pithy, forcible sentences even Solomon in all his glory could hardly hold his own when the Commander-in-Chief took a pen in his hand.

His inspection of a British regiment at Barrackpore, in those days of spit and polish when a regiment that could move like a wall and wheel like a gate was of more importance than knowing how to shoot, created a sensation. Charging up at a tearing gallop he pulled up dead (another proof of a good soldier) and took

the salute. Jamming in his spurs he rode half-way down the line and stopped. Wheeling about, he said, "It's too hot. Send the men home." Without another word he went too.

"The Cassandra of the old Bengal Army" he feared for its future "Your young, independent, wild cadets will some day find the Indian army taken out of his hands by the Subahdars." That happened in 1857 when regiments without British officers were otherwise complete in most details. It is worth relating that when the 'Mutineers' besieged Lucknow their bands played every evening as usual and finished the programmes with God Save the Queen.

Idolised by the troops, popular *guf* among them was that he was sacked for giving the Indian soldier a rise in pay, "off his own bat." Like everybody else doing a job of work in a subordinate position, sowar and sepoy were scandalously underpaid. The extra sum did little to benefit the soldier but it meant much to the Company. The records do not bear out this story, but, as an old philosopher put it—"Weigh well these facts but put no question."

There is some truth in the assertion that it is only by not paying one's bills you can hope to live in the memory of the commercial classes, although those so remembered in these days, of ration cards must often feel its disadvantages.

A century ago the best of people tried to live within their income even if they had to borrow to do it. "He has passed his lakh" used to be the compliment paid to a Company's servant who could proudly boast of owing more than £10,000.

Imprisonment for debt was common ; once in, for that you could easily stay there for life. The Debtors' Prison on the Maidan had, for drinking, cooking and bathing purposes, a shallow pond 40 feet square. It was the custom for prisoners to stand at the gate begging for money, from passers by, to buy water. Their condition was abject in the extreme, and in many cases as hopeless as if they were on a desert island near the South Pole as the following *Letters to Florine* show.

"It is there, Florine, that debtors are crowded together ; it is there, too, where their death is often caused by creditors as greedy as they are merciless. Detention in so horrible a place is not always the fruit of misconduct ; other causes are able to drag worthy citizens there and you often see among the prisoners far more respectable persons than the cleverer rascals who by deceiving the good faith of the Judges, consign the former to a shameful state of captivity.

"Believe me, my dear friend, that I have many times seen, in the midst of the most brilliant society of Calcutta—which every evening drives forth to display unbounded luxury at a little distance from the "Gelle" (jail) creditors have their debtors arrested even at the time when the latter were proceeding in fine conveyances from which they were ruthlessly dragged to be thrown into a sort of covered wagon, its windows barred. What a change of Fortune ! A moaning wife, the cries of young children, seldom succeed in softening the hungry creditor who takes a savage delight in seeing the mournful vehicle

leisurely moving towards the "gelle" whose brazen gate closes, perhaps never again to open for the luckless debtor.

"Do not imagine, Florine, that this prison bears the slightest resemblance to those in Europe devoted to the same purpose. The latter would be abodes of bliss compared with the place of which I have just spoken, and one could remark, without fear of being mistaken, that there was as great a difference between them as 'the distance of Calcutta from Paris.'"

*A French Commentary of Calcutta in the Good Old Days.* Translated by Arthur Gordon, *Englishman*, 10th December 1928.

Nevertheless, far too many men look upon all creditors as heartless blood-suckers, and feel they do not do themselves justice if they refrain from trying to borrow or to buy on (eternal) credit.

## CALCUTTA TAVERNS (*Continued*)

### *THE HARMONIC*

In 1780 the Harmonic Tavern in Lall Bazar was the centre of social exaltation, something of a Bohemian Club more than a tavern of the class that was general then, but nevertheless, a tavern. The building was the handsomest house in the "Settlement" where Society reigned, and as some of those outside the pale put it—"profligacy can be found tuning the lute."

Hicky's Bengal Gazette in whose columns candour was seldom a missing ingredient attacked it often in what might be termed spicy insults, except that that would be incorrect for Hicky had amazing skill in depicting public men with nicknames that hurt like scorpion stings. A nickname is the hardest stone the devil can throw at a man, and Hicky's were all that.

According to Mrs. Fay who was in Calcutta at the time, Mrs. Warren Hastings was a patron of the Harmonic Tavern, holding a sort of Court there.

Mrs. Fay goes on—"I felt far more gratified some time ago when Mrs. Jackson procured me a ticket for the Harmonic which was supported by a select number of gentlemen who each in alphabetical rotation gave a concert, ball and supper, during the cold season; I believe once a fortnight. That I attended was given by a Mr. Taylor, which closed the subscription, and



I understand it will not be renewed, a circumstance generally regretted as it was an elegant amusement and conducted on a very eligible plan. We had a great deal of delightful music, and Lady C..... who is a capital performer on the harpsichord played amongst other pieces a Sonata of Nicolai's in a most brilliant style."

"Mrs. H..... (Mrs. Warren Hastings) was of the party ; she came in late, and happened to place herself on the opposite side of the room, beyond a speaking distance, so strange to tell, I quite forgot she was there! After some time had elapsed, my observant friend Mrs. J. who had been impatiently watching my looks, asked if I had paid my respects to the Lady Governess? I answered in the negative, having had no opportunity, as she had not chanced to look towards me when I was prepared to do so. "Oh," replied the kind old lady, "you must fix your eyes on her and never take them off, till she notices you: Miss C... has done this and so have I; it is absolutely necessary to avoid giving offence. I soon followed her prudent advice and was soon honoured with a complacent glance, which I returned as became me by a most respectful bend: Not long after she walked over to our side and conversed very affably with me, for we are now through Mrs. Jackson's interference on very good terms together." (January 1781.)

"Pubs are havens for those people whose position in society is that of hanging suspended—like Mahomet's coffin—somewhere between the Club and the bazaar." And one of the

advantages of a pub over a Club is that you never know who may come into it. In a Club you often know only too well. The Harmonic appears to have been most exclusive, but there was no balloting.

William Hickey, who talks of tamashas at the Harmonic where he went dolled up as if he had been blown off a Christmas tree, proud of having filled his friends right up to the brim, relates:—

“Having partaken of several entertainments given at the tavern by Captain Sutton and other gentlemen, I thought it incumbent upon me to return the compliment, and accordingly bespoke the handsomest dinner that could be provided for forty at the Harmonic Tavern. On the day appointed thirty nine sat down to table, all of whom did ample justice to the feast, and drank freely, some of my guests remaining until three in the morning when they staggered home, well pleased with their fare and declaring I was an admirable host.”

Hickey, a somewhat doubtful but an interesting character, appears to have been one of those who could endure the misfortunes of other people with heroic fortitude, for in all the four volumes there does not appear to be anything of the Good Samaritan in his make-up.

In the days of the Harmonic extremes prevailed. The rich were above the imagination of the poor. Swank, right up to caddishness, was practised and tolerated. Men and women ate and drank to excess and, when they were rich, gambled in enormous sums. All were

devotees at the shrine of noise. In fact, shouting on all occasions was fashionable almost up to the end of the Nineteenth Century.

Officials were dishonest and proud of their good fortune when they got away with immense bribes. That is they had the usual cheerfulness of the successful scoundrel. At public functions these birds of prey got themselves up like birds of Paradise. William Hickey gives some idea of what went on:—

‘At that period (1788) the King’s birthday was celebrated (in Calcutta) with much pomp, the Governor-General always giving a dinner to the gentlemen of the Settlement, and a ball and a supper to the ladies at night, at which entertainments everybody, *malgre* the extreme heat, appeared in full dress with bags and swords. I made for the occasion a coat of pea-green lined with white silk and richly ornamented with spangled and foiled lace, waistcoat and breeches decorated in like manner being also of white silk. All the company appearing in splendid apparel made a very handsome show. The Governor-General presided at the dinner-table. Upon the cloth being removed he gave as first toast. The King; then, the Queen and Royal Family; The Commander-in-Chief; Success to British arms in India—each toast being followed by a salute of twenty-one guns, from cannon drawn up for that purpose in front of the Court House.” Vol. II p. 173.

Most writers of Hickey’s time denounce his *Bengal Gazette* for being coarse. But was he any worse than Society? Lord Robert Seymour

kept a diary and in 1788 he tells a story about the "First Gentleman in Europe."

"At Mrs. Vaneck's assembly last week the Prince of Wales very much to the honor of his polite and elegant behaviour, measured the breadth of Mrs. V's behind with his Handkerchief and showed the measurement to most of the Company." Swearing too was habitual among men and women. Bishop Wilberforce writing in 1831 gave some ideas of Society. "A good Audit Dinner: 23 people drank 11 bottles of wine, 28 quarts of beer,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  of spirits and 12 bowls of punch; and would have drunk twice as much if not restrained. *None, we hope, drunk,*" and how much of that was the Bishop's?

When people put themselves above others they are a good target for those who have the courage to attack them and apparently the Harmonic and its supporters gave J. A. Hicky several chances to jeer in the columns of his paper. His account of a 'dust-up' for the time being rendered the name 'Harmonic' a palpable misnomer; and, as indiscretion is the better part of literature, it is reproduced here purely (or impurely, for to the pure all things are worth looking at) with the object of depicting the mannerisms of the times.

"On Tuesday night last, there was a very splendid and numerous meeting at the H—, nothing could excell the Brilliancy of the Ladies dresses and Diamonds; excepting the animating lustre of their bright eyes, which kindled up such a promise and Fire in the youthful hearts of the young Beaux, as set them all in a Blaze,

and cast an animating glory around the Ball Room——No male heart escaped the all-captivating Rays of their beauteous Eyes, nay they thawed the frozen hearts in vertuous old age, none went free from the House, but a few cankered hearted Contractors.

“The Ball ended about half past 12 when the Ladies (Gentle Creatures,<sup>o</sup> God bless them) retired to their different Habitations, attended thro’ the Crowd of Servants some by their fond and loving Husbands, others by their languishing, dying Lover who whispered a thousand soft Things in their Ears, whilst handing them to their Carriages, and vowing an everlasting constancy, obedience, and Love, and that Racks and Daggers, must be their only relief if they would not take some pity on them. Thus much for the dying Swains and Danglers,.....Whilst other jolly Bucks more free from the Bonds of Wedlock, or Cupids Galling Chains, remained behind to seek for charms in the sparkling juice of the grape, who like the true Sons of Bacchus and Comus kept it up until four and in ail probability their happiness had continued until Sol on his journey toward the West had bid ’em good morning ; had they not been disturbed by those two carping Sons of Momus who intruded themselves into their Company and had began to quarrel about the Batta of 500 S. Rupees ; this disturbance broke up the Company, and the altercation between those sorded beings grew more violent on their way down stairs. One of these Gentlemen it seems had interest enough to obtain a very Lucrative Contract some time ago,

and which it seems he had sold for a very comfortable sum to the person he was then disputing with, being confident that he would soon be able to procure a second for himself the purchasers having refused to pay the batta of the 500 Rupees in dispute: the fellow from his uncommon fondness for money grew immoderately warm, and as soon as they reached the yard before the House they came to blows the fellow willing to take revenge for the loss of his money knowing that the affairs would never bear a Scrutiny in a Court of Justice, he took aim at the purchaser, and hit him a well judged blow right on the Bridge of the Nose which in two moments almost closed up both his eyes; the purchaser on his finding his daylight growing dim and dreading the consequence attending a total eclipse of his Optical lunimores, and having a great reason to suppose, that the alarming Catastrophe would soon take place, as he could then scarcely distinguish the looming of the feller's head, he was resolved to make the best use of his time, and by a well aimed blow with which he sent his Shoulder, he struck the feller such a Derier on the Bread basket, as knocked him speechless and sprawling on the ground. So violent a blow on an overcharged Stomach was attended with a following Catastrophe. This friend Master Tommy Colleybott, a very harmless talkative lad remarkable for his love of Dress tinsel and a Hooker, was Melted into compassion by seeing his friend on the Ground, very good naturedly stoops down and lifts him up, the moving of the object set all the inward materials

in full play the explosion took place, which in some respects (relative to noise and smell) resembled very much a bung flying out of a blubber Cask at Greenland Dock which on these occasions are always attended the Noise and Stench, just in this manner did the feller reward his friend Master Tommy by sending the whole contents right into his face, from whence it fell down in Large quantities on his fine Spangled waistcoat, silk Breeches and Stockings and entirely overloaded his new fashioned grid-iron shoe buckles. Most deplorable was his situation, he ran about the yard in a distracted state with his head reclined to avoid (but impossible) the horrid stench of his friend's presence, his arms he held out in a trembling position, and in short ran about like an unfortunate fowl who has escaped suffocation in a stinking ditch, Most Excellent News for Buckram the Taylor." All of which leads one to believe that supporters of the Harmonic woke in the morning with swelled heads and were lucky if that was all that was wrong with them.—*Bengal Gazette*, Saturday, 10th November 1781.

The matter did not end there judging by the correspondence published in the same paper the following week.

### "SUBSCRIPTION ASSEMBLY"

"The Tavern Keepers Charge of 1997 S. Rupees, for the Entertainment of two Hundred Persons at the first Assembly appearing to the Stewards too extravagant a Charge to be passed

without the approbation of the Subscribers at large, they request a meeting may be held on Monday morning at the Harmonic House at eleven o'clock to take the above into consideration." November 15th, 1781.

He is indeed a poor Tavern Keeper who has no friends and one can suspect that the man in Loll Bazaar did quite a lot of entertaining among his supporters before that Monday morning meeting came off. The inquiry seems to have resulted in hot words, which come easily when a hot curry follows on a hot morning after a hot night. And judging by the second notice those who grumbled at the extortions and exactions of the Harmonic came off second best.

*Calcutta, November 21, 1781.*

"THE Stewards of the Assembly beg leave to acquaint the Subscribers, that they find themselves under the necessity of resigning the office ; and, request a meeting may be held on Monday at 12 o'Clock at the Harmonic House, to chuse others. Altho' it is not necessary to assign reasons for this step, they think it a Compliment due to the Subscribers at large to say a few words on the subject—that they give up a troublesome Office because they were improperly treated by a party of Gentlemen who attended the last meeting, for the express purpose of supporting the Tavern against the Stewards, (a contest the Stewards never thought of). They were induced to act on Tuesday last, ONLY because they were fearful of interrupting the Public Amusement, by a too sudden resignation."







The next item of interest is an account of the disposal of the building in accordance with the custom of the times.

### THE LOTTERY *for the HARMONIC HOUSE*

“BEING filled up Messrs. Stark and Robertson acquaint the subscribers that Messrs. Henry Grand, Wm. Paxton, Ph. Delisle, and Captain John Mac’Intyre, are chosen for the Committee to superintend the drawing of it, which is to be on the first Monday of July next, at Nichols and Creightons Tavern, about Seven o’Clock in the Morning, provided they are not under the necessity of postponing it to another day, on account of the Money not being all paid into the hands of Messrs. Stark and Robertson, before that time—It is therefore hoped, that those who have not paid, will order payment to be made, and to receive their Tickets as soon as possible.” (June 6th 1781)

There were many schemes for raising funds in those days which took the form of lotteries. Wellesley Street was made from money made in that way and St. John’s Church, said to have been built through the “piety of mariners” owed much to them. Curiously too, the first of the big prizes fell to the Church, the first number drawn, and everybody was pleased. Religious bodies have often displayed great skill in promoting such schemes and have been extraordinarily lucky which almost looks as if the promoters start with odds on.

MESSRS. STARK *and* ROBERTSON

ACQUAINT the Subscribers that the Lottery for the Harmonic House was drawn this morning, and the prize came up to No. 148.....

The proprietors of the following numbers being entitled to have their subscription money repaid are requested to draw on Messrs. Stark and Robertson for the amount of their respective Tickets (in Class the Ninth.)

137	143	149
138	144	150
139	145	151
140	146	152
141	147	153
142	June 30, 1781.	

There is a concealed 13 in that lucky 148, the holder being Mr. Justice Hyde, one of those judges who dispensed (and dispensed with) justice, a man incapable of tempering injustice with mercy but who revelled in haranguing for an hour and a half the poor dejected misfortunates whom he intended to sentence to death for some trumpery offence not involving twenty rupees.

Although the building changed hands, the Harmonic Tavern carried on, for there is an announcement dated August 16, 1781, in which "Mr. Creighton, who is on the point of embarking for Europe, informs the Publick that the business of the Harmonic Tavern will be carried on by E. Creighton, J. Baxter and J. Joyce until his departure and then by J. Baxter and J. Joyce."

Creighton apparently had a good long holi-

day and it looks as if while he was away, Baxter and Joyce made hay while the sun shone even if Creighton had to make bricks without straw. On October 14, 1784, Creighton announced that he had "opened the Harmonic Tavern" and invited the public to attend the ceremonies.

In January 1785 a Meeting was held at the Harmonic Tavern to "consider an address of thanks" to Warren Hastings who was taking his final leave of Calcutta on the morning of February 1st.

After the Harmonic in Lall Bazaar closed down, the London Tavern was opened in Vansittart Row, on the south side of "Tank Square". An advertisement in *Calcutta Gazette* October 7, 1784, announces:—

"Messrs Martin Lacy and Parr, Masters of the London Tavern, most humbly present their respects to the Ladies and Gentlemen of the Settlement and take the liberty of informing them that they have opened a Subscription for the Assembly, once a fortnight, during the next cold weather to begin on Tuesday; the 23rd November next, and to continue every 2nd Tuesday, provided there shall be 150 Subscribers." They added—"They flatter themselves with the hopes of some encouragement and support from a generous Public, when they solemnly declare that they did not know the Harmonic Tavern would be again opened as a Tavern when they contracted with a builder, about two months ago, to erect a large and commodious Assembly Room, ninety-six feet long and thirty-six feet wide."

Mr. Soubise advertised in 1784 to teach fencing on the following terms:—Two gold mohurs entrance, and two gold mohurs per month. "His days are Mondays, Wednesday and Fridays. Such gentlemen as choose to take private lessons at their own houses, will be attended on Tuesday and Saturdays, in which case his terms are three gold mohurs entrance and three gold mohurs per month."

On April 26th, 1786, the "Second Lodge of Bengal" assembled for the last time at the Harmonic. The next Meeting was at Wright's Tavern. An advertisement in *Calcutta Gazette* on June 22, 1786—"Mr. Wright at the New Tavern near the Church, having purchased some live Turtles, he means dressing one on Saturday the 24th instant and begs those Ladies and Gentlemen who would wish to favour him with their commands to be as early as possible in their applications."

A Mr. Gairard advertised an outdoor Vauxhall for December 8, 1786, with "music champagne playing in different parts of the gardens, garden walks illuminated at nine; and a convenient place appropriated for the carriage and palankeens in the gardens". Ladies and gentlemen might "amuse themselves at the agreeable exercise of throwing out small rockets etc. to win prizes."

Two years later, on December 4, 1788, he was again before the public as a promotor of this style of entertainment. But he was warned by a correspondent in the *Calcutta Gazette* of December 7, that he had better fulfil his engage-

ments this time, as the public will not be as passive as they were on the last occasion.

### UNION TAVERN

Angus Gun begs leave to inform the Public that he has taken that large and commodious house, No. 44, near the foot of the Cossitullah Bazar, occupied last season by Captain Fairfull, of the *Minerva*.

Several apartments are fitted up for the accommodation of Boarders and Lodgers, and a stock of good Wines and Liquors is laid in a Billiard Table, Coach House and Stabling for Six Horses. The charges will be very moderate, and such Gentlemen as are pleased to favor him with their patronage may depend upon every exertion in his power to render satisfaction.

*Thursday, July 31st, 1788.*

The Harmonic was said to have been turned into an Academy in 1791, but that did not end its career as a Tavern. It was obviously the place where people gathered to talk over matters of interest, and could hardly have been entirely devoted to education.

An advertisement of the times is interesting, showing, as it does, that children were not overworked at school. One can be certain that in accordance with the spirit and cruelty of the age, there was plenty of bamboo bacsheesh, that being the motive power in learning. Schoolmasters spoiled the rod before thinking of sparing the child.

M. SOUBIE

"BEGGS to inform the Gentlemen of the Settlement that he has left Mr. Le Gallais and now keeps his school at the Harmonic where he attends, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, from seven in the Morning till half past Ten o'Clock."

"ADVERTISEMENT.—Mr. Macdonald presents his respects to the ladies and gentlemen amateurs of dancing, and informs them that he will instruct any lady or gentleman, who are in the habit of dancing, in the fashionable Scotch step, and its application to country dancing, for sicca rupees 100."

"Besides the fashionable step, the athletic and agile may be taught a variety of Scotch steps, equally elegant, but more difficult in the execution, for an additional charge." (1795)

During the same year theatrical performances were given at Writer's Buildings. A Subscriber paid Rs. 120 for a season ticket which entitled him to a series of six performances to which he could take the lady of his family. Single tickets were 64 rupees each.

For the farce, performed at the Calcutta Theatre, on May 13, 1795, followed by a musical entertainment of *The Waterman*, with a view of Westminster Bridge, and a representation of the Rowing match. Pit and box, sixteen rupees; upper boxes, twelve rupees; gallery, eight rupees.

Rents in Calcutta seem to have been higher in the eighteenth century than in the next. Thus



in 1786 Wheler's house is advertised to be sold with  $3\frac{1}{2}$  bagasi of ground, "present rent 900 Sicca Rs. monthly." From 450 to 850 Rs. would appear to have been the ordinary rent for a large upper-roomed house with extensive compound in a good locality. The Calcutta Exchange, on the S. W. corner of the Great Tank, let for 350 Rs. monthly. Mrs. Fay says she paid 200 Rs. for a house "in a part of the town not much esteemed," otherwise she should have to pay 300 or 400 Rs.

Doctor Dinwiddle advertised in 1795 a course of lectures on Natural Philosophy and Chemistry to commence on April 21st. The course to consist of from 25 to 30 lectures. Subscription, ten gold mohurs. (Roughly, £20).

Fine Hyson Teas in 1793 were Rs.  $4/8$  per pound.

There always are men suffering from that infirmity of mind which leads them to believe everything they are told and nothing seems to take a firmer hold of the imagination than that living in the old days was cheap. The epitaph on those poor ignoramuses was written long ago:—

"Stranger, these ashes were a man's,  
Crushed with a grievous weight ;  
He had acquired more ignorance  
Then he could assimilate."

*Calcutta Exchange Coffee House by subscription, will be opened about the 1st July next, 1798.*

"The Coffee House to be open to all gentlemen, merchants and traders ; to consist of three

rooms, commodiously fitted up, having access from Council House Street and likewise from Tank Square, and to be accommodated with all the Newspapers printed in Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay, also with two of the most approved London Papers, which will be sent out by every conveyance, and some of the most curious and interesting political pamphlets that may appear from time to time.

"The Coffee House to be let to an active and experienced person who shall at the same time carry on the Tavern business, and who may have the use of the Exchange Hall when not interfering with the public entertainments, but the subscription to remain always in the hands of the proprietor.

"N. B.—The assembly subscription, which has lately been joined to the Coffee House subscription, (four rupees per mensem, paid monthly) but for particular reasons has been separated, will again be opened when the rooms are finished and the number of assemblies reduced from six to four. The public will then have an opportunity of judging of the beauty, elegance, and convenience of the rooms, and how far the proprietor is entitled to their patronage. The room when finished will be let by the night for all entertainments, balls, concerts, and public meetings at a moderate charge, by application to the proprietor.—*Bengal Past and Present*, Vol. 8.

In this case the "experienced person" knew more than the promotor. Money and experience often change hands. The Royal Exchange does

not mean the Stock Exchange, which is quite a different place. There, the cards are first sorted in the tnieves' kitchen and players are often bullied into believing themselves lucky if all they get out of the deal is the shuffle.

In 1799 the Exchange Coffee House was advertised for sale. "To satisfy a number of claimants who are not in circumstances to afford delay," it was decided to raise the money by a lottery, 1,600 chances at Rs. 100 each. From the prospectus one feels that if the promotor did not know sufficient to run a tavern he knew enough to make a lottery attractive.

Parr's tavern at No. 1, Dacres Lane was a meeting place for Freemason's Lodges in 1798. The house is still standing.

In 1799-1800 Lodge "*Star in the East*" rented a building for Meetings and Cadet Flouet supplied the dinners but whether in his own tavern or in the Lodge building is not recorded.

During Holwell's day Loll Bazar was considered quite a fashionable part of Calcutta. Some years later, (1768) it was said to be the best street in the Settlement but was full of petty shops and "boutiques" where Bengalee traders made a precarious living. If length counts it was a straight road from the Custom House to what is now called Sealdah. The first part, from the Strand to what is now Wellington Street was called Loll Bazar. Then there was a section known as Bow Bazar, and the short, far end, was Boitakhana.

The famous "Bread and Cheese" bungalow was at the far end of Bow Bazar, and in 1776

at the height of its popularity. Several historians describe it as rather insignificant, with small grounds.

According to the description given in Tulloh & Co.'s advertisement of January 14, 1802, it consisted of a hall 28 by 21 feet, four sleeping rooms, two enclosed verandahs, with every convenient out offices, the whole standing in 24 beeghas and 12 cottahs (about eight acres) of land.

Archdeacon W. K. Firminger, in his history of Lodge Industry and Perseverance, mentions several taverns. "Burrowes, (Mrs.) Le Gallais, and Mangeon respectfully beg leave to acquaint the ladies and gentlemen of the Settlement that they have, by the advice of several gentlemen, taken that commodious house in Council House Street, formerly the Bengal Bank, which they are fitting up in the most convenient and modern style for the accommodation of routs, balls, concerts, dinners, suppers, etc., for the ensuing season, and that it shall be the constant study of B. L. & M. by their unremitting attention to endeavour to deserve that generous support which has hitherto been shown to former taverns in Calcutta." (May 5, 1796.)

Complaints were made later about the "very heavy charges made by the keepers of the Bank tavern."

In St. John's Day, 1797, the Lodge assembled at Parr's Tavern in Dacres Lane while on January 9, 1778, the Lodge met at Scornee's but apparently the expense was even greater than renting their own premises. December 2nd and

27th, 1799, again saw the Members at Parr's tavern. Two interesting items are Saltpetre for cooling drinks—Rs. 31-12, and hire of a piano for one evening, Rs. 30.

Soldiers and sailors called Loll Bazar "Flag Street" owing to strings of flags across the street leading to eating houses, grog shops, and brothels. As early as 1745 the Government of India investigated the evil of Outrages on Seamen which were committed there.

In the 1780's a Governor went personally to Flag Street with a party of soldiers. Numbers of Spaniards, Portuguese, and Italians who sold "Pariar Arrack to the great debauchery of the garrison" were arrested and taken to Fort William.

When the 76th Foot were in garrison the military authorities impressed enough vagabonds to form two companies of the regiment.

Soldiers and sailors drank and fought to their heart's content in Flag Street and were not content with keeping it to themselves. Jack ashore with his unlovely Nancy was a tough handful, particularly when there were hundreds together. As late as 1860, it was estimated that there were 8000 European sailors and 200 ships in Calcutta. It was not unusual for drunken ruffians to fight inside the Scots Kirk and foot passengers would find themselves held up for the price of a drink, but when one knows how they existed and worked while at sea it is a wonder that they were not far worse.

The advent of steam, and the opening of Kidderpore Docks in 1892 made a great altera-

tion to Loll Bazar. One could not walk along without being molested by fighting sailors who demanded money for drink. The police treated them with great brutality, and the magistrates gave the maximum punishments, but all round improvement started with the Docks, although Christian sailors were still treated worse than dogs by Christian ship owners, many of whom thought they bought a special corner of Heaven by giving the men a Bible before sailing. When you come to look back the hypocritical piety of the times was the greatest of our national defects. Unfortunately a lot of it still remains.

"Cant and humbug is very prevalent amongst a certain clique of the English, I am told. *Par exemple*, the humanity-mongers, as they are called, are a very eccentric race. They are like the Brahmins of India, who hired and maintained beggars, that vermin might be fed upon them.

"A short time ago, these tender-hearted gentlemen made a terrible outcry against the English sailors, because they interfered with the pirates in the China seas: what a cruelty to fire at men who only laboured in their vocation. Brave fellows, too, these pirates, for the meanest of their crew had slain half-a-score of men, cut the throats of as many women, ripped up twice the number of children, and assisted in burning at least a dozen villages. Pirates, they said, were human beings; if they but continued in the situation in life in which they were called, what right had English sailors to interfere with their pursuits!"—From *The Foreigner in London in*

*Recollections of the Mess-Table and the Stage,*  
(London, 1855).

## R. BEARD

Begs leave to inform the gentlemen of the Settlement and the public in general that he has taken that large and commodious house, lately occupied by Messrs. Ord and Knox, and formerly known by the name of the Harmonic, to which house he will move on the 1st of January, 1804, for the accommodation of large parties &c., and the ball room is sufficiently spacious to contain five to six hundred persons with ease, and every other accommodation that is required.

R. Beard has engaged some of the best French Cooks, and intends in future to send out dinners, &c., to gentlemen's houses.

The building was eventually occupied by Palmer & Co., the leading Agency House in India, who ruined as many people as the Harmonic entertained. Palmer was an upright man for those days but, overwhelmed by circumstances, he dragged down other business concerns, the losses, in the aggregate, exceeding £30 millions.

Creighton boasts in the *Gazette* of November 17, 1784, of a "new method of preserving and cleansing oysters so as to render them a fine flavour, and give them preference above any ever brought to this place," recommending too, some "good cask porter." He was also in need of Turtles and "any person having such to

dispose of, may hear of a purchaser on applying to Mr. Creighton at the New Tavern."

Two years later, that is on Thursday, January 19, 1786, we read that, "By permission, Mr. Creighton has erected a large Hindostany Tent on the Calcutta Course for public breakfasts, by subscription, at two Gold Mohurs each for the season, which will be given twice in each week, to the end of March next."

"Subscriptions are received at the Harmonic, and at the Tent, where the proposals are to be seen.

"Mr. Creighton is encouraged to hope for success from the above plan by the countenance he has already met with, and should it prove agreeable to the Company resorting to the Stand, he shall spare no pains or trouble to render it as commodious as possible."

A week later he announced that "A Dinner will be prepared on the 27th instant at Mr. Creighton's Tent on the Calcutta Course being the day of entrance for horses. The terms, as before, *viz.*; one Gold Mohur Each."

One hundred and sixty years ago the trade in oysters appears to have been well organised. Not only were they brought up for the table, but shipments of what were termed "Pearl Oysters" came to Calcutta from Ceylon. They were put up to auction in lots of 12,000 and purchasers kept them in the sun to open their mouths, and then felt for the pearls.

It has long been possible to obtain both pearls and peritonitis from oysters, shell fish being the most dangerous food in the tropics,



but the demand tempted Mr Creighton to advertise in 1784 that the Harmonic Tavern had accommodation for gentlemen and "an additional well for the oysters."

There was apparently more in the oyster trade than is found in the shell, as the following advertisement in 1785 shows,

"As Mr. Creighton has advanced considerable sums of money to people concerned in the oyster business, for the sole purpose of procuring his oysters, he is sorry to inform them that he is obliged to advance the price from this date for those oysters that are sent out of the Harmonic, owing to his people disposing of them to such persons as wait on the river, and deprive him of what in reality is his property ; as he is reduced from the above motives to the necessity of re-purchase, he hoped it will be a sufficient apology to the public."

## CALCUTTA SUBURBAN TAVERNS

William Hickey, whose *Memoirs* were among the best sellers of 1919, relates that he arrived in the Hooghly on November 1, 1777 and took final leave of the *Seahorse* after engaging a paunceway to take him to Calcutta.

We proceeded in high glee. The boat was rowed by six black fellows who were not sparing of their labour, so that we went at a good rate, and by six in the evening arrived off Culpee where the Indiamen and other ships of heavy burthen then lay. Here we stopped to let the people rest and to wait for the next flood.

"Going a quarter of a mile up a creek, we landed at a poor shabby house called a *tabern*, the appearance of which both internal and external gave us new-comers a very unfavourable idea of a Bengal house of entertainment. It was in every respect uncomfortable and beastly dirty. It was the Colonel's (Watson) intention that the party should sleep here, but not a single bed could be obtained. In about an hour and a half after our arrival we had served up some very excellent fish, tolerable fowls, with plenty of eggs and bacon, and, what was a prodigious luxury to me who had been so long without it, capitally good bread.

"Having satisfied our appetites we fixed upon a billiard table as our resting place, the Colonel, Major Mestayer, and myself taking our respective stations at full length upon it. Sleep

was, however, entirely out of the question from the *myriads of mosquitoes that assailed us*. At the end of three hours' misery I arose and walked about the room, surprised at the hideous yells of jackals innumerable. Towards daybreak the troublesome insects quitted the apartment for the open air. I then lay down upon three chairs, and being exhausted from want of rest, fell into a sound sleep, which continued upwards of two hours and refreshed me wonderfully.

“At eight I arose, and did ample justice to the hot rolls, tea and coffee. At ten, the tide suiting, we re-embarked in our very accommodating vessel, taking with us a plentiful supply of cold fowls and other food.” Finding that they could not reach Calcutta that night they landed at “Woolburreah” (Ooloobaria) where Colonel Watson apparently cooked “some smoking hot curry of fish and fowl, which we devoured voraciously, pronouncing them delicious, though I cannot say that I much admired them, nor did I ever become fond of Hindustani curry. Having washed down our food with claret, we resumed our stations in the paunceway, rolling ourselves up in boat cloaks, and thus made it out for the night tolerably well.” In about an hour they were off Colonel Watson's house at Garden Reach.

Up to 1824, Kedgerree, on the low lands of the west bank of the Hooghly, 68 miles below Calcutta, and 20 miles below Diamond Harbour, was quite a populous town, but the river has washed away all traces of its taverns, where Anglo-Indians both outward and homeward

bound were accustomed to break their journey. It was the highest point that could be reached by the *Indiamen*. Passengers were left to make their own way up and down the river in budgerows.

Mrs. Fenton, wife of a British infantry subaltern found Kedgeree in 1829 a prosperous town boasting of many taverns. On her arrival she stopped at the house of Mr. Cleland at Garden Reach, and expressed astonishment at finding the ladies of the family lighting cheroots after each meal.

"Sophia Goldborne" in *Hartly House* (1784) tells her story in letters to a girl friend in England:—"We proceeded on our voyage up the river to one of the stations for *Indiamen*, called Culpee.....where my father received the most affectionate greetings from his old acquaintance; and we were told that three *bugeros* were on their way to welcome and accommodate us.

"This sound having no semblance whatever of the eastern dignity, I begged my father to inform me what a *bugero* was:—He smiled and bid me wait their arrival, not seek to anticipate my own discoveries in a single instance.

"We next passed the second station called Cudgeree; when lo, the *bugeros* appeared in view; and judge, if you can, of the pleasure it gave me, after having been so long confined to one set of company, to perceive I was on the point of tasting the boundless joys of Eastern magnificence.

"You have seen, as you suppose, some very handsome barges on the river Thames, but how

poor a figure the handsomest would make, in comparison with the *bugeros*, or barges, of Calcutta, I will endeavour to convince you.

"As they approached, my ears drank in the most delightful sounds; a band of music, as is the custom, occupied each of them, playing the softest of airs."

(That is rather interesting. Who were the musicians? Oriental music can be more offensive than words—a terrible weapon in the hands of those who know how to use it—seldom agreeable to European ears; Fryer, who came out in 1673 confessed that when he heard it "he could think of nothing but the last trump." Some Indian music is pleasant to the ear, but most of it can mask any enormity.)

"The company in the first that came alongside of us were seated upon deck, with kittesan boys, in the act of suspending their kittesans, (umbrellas) which were finely ornamented, over their heads; which boys were dressed in white muslin jackets, tied round the waist with green sashes, and gartered at the knees in like manner with the puckered sleeves in England, with white turbans bound by the same coloured riban; the rowers, resting on their oars in a similar uniform, made a most picturesque appearance."

"A kittesan boy instantly took his stand behind my chair, and an attendant, called a bearer, flew backwards and forwards in my service; and in this state we reached Diamond Point, a place of debarkation, where we found a suitable number of palanquins in waiting to accommodate us all."

"Sophia Goldborne's" father was captain of an East Indiaman, a person of much consequence in those days. According to R. W. Eastwick (whose *Adventures of a Master Mariner* were published in 1891) he ranked on shore with honorable Members of Council, and received a salute of thirteen guns on landing from a voyage. Besides his pay, he was permitted to carry free freight on his own account and a voyage was reckoned to be worth to him quite £5000.

"Sophia" made friends with a "country-born young lady extremely winning in her address" and called to see her after breakfast, "But judge my surprise, Arabella, when, on entering her chamber, I found her under the hands of her hair-dresser, actually smoking a pipe!" Both men and women smoked the hooka in public as well as in private.

She goes on—"that pipe was a most superb *hooka*, the bell filled with rose-water; and instead of odious tobacco, a preparation of the betel-root, rolled and wetted, was placed in the bole, which bole was beautiful china-ware, covered with a filligree silver cap, with a mouth-piece of the same materials. Nor can I give you a conception of the graceful manner in which the snake (the long ornamented tube) was twined through the rails of her chair, and turned under her arm, so as not to have incommoded any person seated by her; or the genteel air with which she drew out the soft fume, and puffed it forth, alternately (for none of it is retained). In a word I wished to have taken her

portrait on the spot, for her form is elegant, her complexion near the European standard, and the novelty of her attitude such, as rendered them altogether an admirable subject for the pencil."

"This kind of smoking is, I am told, the characteristic custom of the *country-born* ladies; and the servant, dressed as I have already described, whose sole business it is to arrange the snake, feed the fire on his knees, and take care of the whole apparatus, is called the *hooka-bearer*, and is an indispensable appendage of Eastern state and etiquette.

In 1779 "MR. & MRS. HASTINGS present their compliments to Mr..... and request the pleasure of his company to a concert and supper on Thursday next. Mr..... is requested to bring no servants except his *Hooccaburdar*."

Ladies worked fancy *hookah* rugs for their sweethearts considering it the finest compliment they could pay a man when they took a pull at his hubblebubble. Ladykillers carried a spare mouthpiece, sometimes of gold, to substitute for the one they were using when taking 'soundings off the uncharted track to see how they stood.

Carey says "We have seen thirty *hookahs* on each side of the table, one behind every diner.....the gurgle-gurgle of the sixty *hookahs* was strange music."

"When thoughts of home come o'er my mind—  
Of distant friends I've left behind,  
In what can I then comfort find?—

My Hookah."

C. H. Addison. 1837.

One of the earliest works that treat of

Calcutta is the *Genuine Memoirs of Asiaticus*, written by Philip Stanhope, an officer of the 1st Dragoon Guards and published in London in 1785. Stanhope came to India in 1774. That was the time when the hooka was in vogue. He says—"Even writers, whose salary and perquisites scarce amount to £200 a year, contrive to be attended, wherever they go, by their hooka burdar, or servant whose duty it is to replenish the hooka with the necessary ingredients, and keep the fire with his breath. But, extravagant as the English are in their hooka, their equipage and their tables, yet all this is absolute parsimony when compared to the expenses of a seraglio; a luxury which only those who enjoy some rank in the service entitles them to a princely income, and whose harem, like the state horses of a monarch, is considered as a necessary appendage to eastern grandeur."

Another writer of those times said that the "cost of a mistress as a regular item of expenditure was Rs. 40 monthly, no great price for a bosom friend when compared with the sums laid out upon some British damsels."

The Rev. J. Long tells of a Major in Fort William who had a female establishment of sixteen. Someone ventured to ask how he managed it. "O, you know, I just give 'em a little rice and let 'em run about," taking care, naturally, that they didn't run too far.

His harem must have been better stocked than his treasury but it was ever so; a liking for the fair sex is in no way diminished by a military education.



Apparently most men who could afford it, and, of course, many who couldn't, followed the amiable indulgences of King Solomon in all his glories ; as the nice old lady put it—Solomon enjoyed all the privileges of the early Christians.

The "privileges" did not last anyhow. To marry a woman from the gutter expecting to find her a pleasing slave is a sure way of making a merciless tyrant.

An officer who was posted to the 34th Native Infantry 110 years ago found his commanding officer wearing a dirty matrimonial hair shirt. He says:—

"The medical officer of the regiment was once requested to visit the Colonel's father-in-law, and on going to the house was conducted by the Colonel to a mud hut in the compound where the father-in-law was seated on a common charpoy."

When changing stations troops started early, the heavy baggage having gone on during the night. Two officers found, on arriving in camp, the Colonel's tent was the only one standing.

"Captain C. approached to offer some assistance to the poor old gentleman, and he *was a gentleman*, although married to a regular native wife, not a half or quarter caste even. We used to call her "Brown Bess." Captain Crofton found the Colonel in a quandary, his wife, refusing to assist in packing up some of his traps. - "Parck. What for I parck? You parck yourself" said the spitfire. The old gentleman has been dead many years or I would not men-

tion it. The moral of it is, let all English gentlemen beware of marrying a native wife. Rather "shut yourself in your room and take pyson" as old Weller said to Samivel, when cautioning him against marrying a widow." Perhaps it is no inconsiderable part of wisdom to know how much of an evil ought to be tolerated.

Hicky's *Bengal Gazette* for February 24-1781 contains the following advertisement:—

### THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Assemble on Tuesday next at the NEW TAVERN where the Committee meet to EAT *Mangoe Fish* for the benefit of *the* Subscribers and on other special affairs. The Supreme President Sir Jacob Viner will take the Chair precisely at Twelve."

Europeans and Indians looked forward to the advent of the *Topsi Mutch* as they do today. The rich used to hire a schooner that traded between Calcutta and Fort Gloster (about 10 miles below Calcutta) to take a "freight of Qui Hyes" with an occasional pipe of Bengal Rum to Fulta for a feed of *topsee muchee*.

The Mangoe Fish (so named from its appearance during the mangoe season) has been described by some writers as the whitebait of Bengal. That is not an accurate description; the Fish is of great delicacy of flavour, slightly larger than a sardine but smaller than a herring. The natives have named them *Tapaswi* (penitent) fish, (abbreviated by Europeans to Tapsi) from their resembling a class of religious peni-

tents, who never shave, but who, likē the mangoe fish, disappear during the rainy season.

A retired Colonel declared that it was worth a journey to Calcutta in a sailing ship to enjoy *tapsi muchee*, and another old Qui Hye declared that "it is true that I had destroyed my liver in Calcutta, but I have eaten Topsis-Mutchees."

R. G. Wallace, author of *Fifteen Years in India* (1805-20) asserted that "Perhaps there is not in the world a greater delicacy than the mangoe fish of the Hooghly, which is as beautiful to the eye as it is delightful to the taste. With the flavour of the mangoe, which is an uncommonly fine fruit, it combines the colours and richness of the trout, and has a fine large roe which cannot be compared to anything, being a perfect original. For two months of the year this charming fish is caught in plenty, and the roes are preserved, and always appear at table."

The price was about the same as today—four rupees a hundred. The delicacy of "Smoaked Mango Fish" advertised 150 years ago appears to have fallen out of favour.

In 1794 Dennagan & Co. established an hotel at Budge Budge, some eight miles down the Hooghly from Calcutta. The house was large, upper-roomed, and situated immediately on the river bank. Post chaises, buggies and saddle horses were available for hire.

There was, in 1798, a number of warehouses and a factory at Diamond Harbour, about 30 miles below Calcutta where ships find good anchorage. Close to it is "Shrimp Channel"

(Chingri Khal) frequently referred to in old books as the haunt of pirates.

Passengers up and down the river could always see the stern warnings to evil doers at *Melancholy Point*, (a sailor's corruption of *Munikhali*) eight miles below Calcutta the place chosen for the execution of river pirates, and was generally decorated with one of these gentry hanging in chains on a high gallows. Higher ~~up the~~ river, just below *Kharda* the bodies of highwaymen were likewise hung in chains as late as 1845.

In 1800 a large tavern was established at *Fulta*, 25 miles below Calcutta, which was patronised by ladies and families who had to disembark there on account of the tide.

This came into the hands of *Gammidge* and *Saunders* who extended it by starting a farm which enabled them to supply fresh vegetables and meat. The tavern was advertised to be in 1802, "By no means disgraceful to the most improved style of architecture. A number of captains and travellers of consequence land here, taking their departure to their various destinations in India."

During the Napoleonic wars an attack by a French fleet was expected, and Government ordered that a chain at *Fulta* should be laid every evening across the river.

Mrs. *Sherwood* left England in 1805 and on arriving at the *Sand Heads*, took a budgerow to bring her up the river. In her account she states—"About this time the tide turned; we arrived at a place called *Fulta*. The tavern at

Fulta was kept by a European. It was a decent respectable place. Our expenses there were 18 rupees."

A writer who came up the river in 1813, after dwelling upon the dreary scenery of the river banks, added—"At Fulta, however, a few hours may be very agreeably spent at a tavern kept by Messrs. Higginson and Baldwin, where the passenger will meet with good accommodation and be able to recruit his spirits after a fatiguing trip."

Fulta tavern was again in the market the year before Waterloo. It is occasionally stated that David Wilson, "Dainty Davie" of the Great Eastern Hotel fame, took it over and called it the Auckland Hotel, but while it may have been a man named Wilson, it could hardly have been David, because he was in active business in Calcutta as late as 1862.

A traveller who stopped at Fulta on November 8, 1817 was well pleased with the hospitality he found there, for he found that the "Tavern here is kept by a Dutchman who consoled us by a most sumptuous breakfast, for which we paid two rupees each."

The unhealthiness of riverside houses and the shortness of life made tavern keeping along the banks an uncertain way of earning a living. Then the advent of steam in 1824 rendered half-way houses unnecessary and certainly unprofitable, so nothing remains of the many places where better food than what was found on board ship could be obtained, and, despite other drawbacks, was thoroughly enjoyed.

In addition to the hotels down the river, there appears to be others up stream. Warren Hastings had a house at Serampore, 15 miles from Calcutta a house Mr. Shirley Tremearne of *Capital* lived in for a time, and is now part of the Hastings Jute Mills. Those who could afford it had swift boats with ten oars that must have made good time between Calcutta and Serampore ; others, of course, could ride part of the way on the Calcutta side of the Hooghly and cross the river in the neighbourhood of Chanak, now called Barrackpore.

### “SIRAMPORE TAVERN”

“CHARLES MATON having taken the house near the Water side, lately occupied by Major Briton, and fitted up the same as a Tavern and Hotel, Respectfully acquaints the Gentlemen of Calcutta, that they may depend on every possible accommodation, good provisions and the best of liquors. Beds also may be had, and Boarding, on Reasonable Terms.

N. B.—A very good Billiard Table and skittle Ground. Mrs. Maton makes up all sorts of Millenary in the neatest manner. 9th December, 1780”

Late Parr's, John Nichols, who formerly kept the Harmonic Tavern in Calcutta has taken that established and well-known Tavern in Serampore, lately kept by Mr. Parr, and provided good Larder and the best liquors etc. The gentlemen of Cantonments, or parties going up or down the river, and all others who may honour

Mr. Nichols with their countenance may depend on the utmost civility and every endeavour to give satisfaction and very moderate charges.

Bed, Lodging, and Board, by the week or month.

N. B.—Mr. Nichols has no partner.

*Thursday April 3, 1788.*

The Parr referred to above was another of those who tried to make a success of the Harmonic. For a time he had a tavern at No. 1, Dácles Lane which was a meeting place for Freemason's Lodges in 1798.

Barrackpore, (Chanak) was made a military station in 1775, where as many as seven Indian regiments were quartered and while it is certain that taverns catered for the officers and civilians, the name of one only—Testillions Hotel—is on record.

## CALCUTTA TAVERNS (*Continued*)

According to Colonel R. C. Sterndale there were "eight hotels (of sorts) in Calcutta in 1800, eleven punch-houses and several European foreigners and others opened eating and lodging houses in different parts of the town for the reception of sailors and others. Billiard tables were kept in these houses, and liquor of various kinds were sold in them under the denomination of beer."

An advertisement on December 15, 1803, brings another tavern keeper before the reader.

"R. BEARD begs to inform the public in general that he has taken that large and commodious house, lately occupied by Messrs. Ord and Knox, and formerly known by the name of the Harmonic, to which he will remove on the 1st of January 1804, for the accommodation of large parties, &c., and the ball room is sufficiently spacious to contain from five to six hundred persons with ease, and every other accommodation that is required.

R. BEARD has engaged some French Cooks, and intends in future to send out dinners &c., to gentlemen's houses.

Judging by modern experience, his outdoor meals would have to be large enough to feed double the number of people that were paid for and he would be lucky were cutlery and crockery returned.

Lieutenant John Pester, writing from Patna



on Nov. 19, 1805, states—"After breakfast I went to a European shop, one of the best in India, which afforded everything of the best, but at prices most extravagant. I gave for one dozen of common cotton stockings seventy rupees. (English money £8 15s.)

On December 13, 1805, he "Arrived at the Old Fort Ghaut and immediately hired a carriage at the moderate price of a gold mohur, (equal to two guineas.)

Jan. 3, 1806. "At ten this morning I left Calcutta.....to go down to the ship. I reached Fulta about nine o'clock, and got a beefsteak and a bottle of claret for my dinner; for the latter they charged me six rupees, and two for my dinner.

Arriving at Prince of Wales Island on March 15, 1806, "This morning I purchased a slave boy of Captain Keasbury to accompany me to England to attend me on board ship. I paid ninety dollars for him (equal to about £25 sterling.)

March 28. "Agreed for my passage at 500 dollars. To have sailed from Bengal with the same accommodation would have cost 2000 dollars." (*War and Sport in India 1802-1806*.—Lieut. John Pester.)

Previous to British rule, slavery was common, all the lower castes being slaves of the higher. Hindu law recognised various forms of slavery. Lord Cornwallis tried to stop the traffic and a ship captain was prosecuted and awarded three months' imprisonment and a fine of 500 rupees for kidnapping 150 children for slavery in July, 1789.

Slaves were used in domestic work, so it is safe to believe the taverns employed many who must have had a thin time among half savage men half drunk. The advertisements tell many tales:—

**TO BE SOLD**—A fine Coffre Boy that understands the business, of Butler, Kismutdar, and cooking. Price four hundred Sicca Rupees. 9th December 1780.

**TO BE SOLD BY PRIVATE SALE**—Two Coffre Boys, who can play remarkably well on the French Horn, about 18 years of Age; belonging to a Portuguese Paddri, lately deceased. For particulars apply to the Vicar of the Portuguese Church, Calcutta. March 17th, 1781.

On Aug. 12, 1797, M. Desgranges, a French official, wrote to the Magistrate of Hooghly as follows:—

“Give me leave to address myself to you on the subject of a runaway slave girl, one of my waiting-women, who left me some time ago and whom one Mr. Vogel has taken under his protection, although by no means authorized to it, but probably from such reason as is not decent to be mentioned, and which I cannot but be offended with. I wrote to him to return the creature! But he would not.”

“**RUN AWAY** from his master, a good looking Coffre Boy about 20 years old and about 6 feet 7 inches in height. When he went off he had a high toupie.” December 29, 1781.

The next one leaves a nasty taste in the mouth.

Thursday, December 2nd, 1784.

## SLAVE BOYS RUN AWAY

On the fifteenth of October last, two slave boys (with the letters V. D. marked on each of their right arms above the elbow, and, exactly of a size,) run away, with a great quantity of plate, &c., &c. This is to request, if they offer their service to any Gentlemen, they will be so kind as to examine their arms, keep them confined, and inform the owner. A reward of ~~one~~ hundred Sicca Rupees will be given to any black man, to apprehend and deliver them up.

November 5th.  
CHUNAR.

J. H. Valentine Dubois,  
Lieutenant.

One of the most scandalous transactions being that of a Captain who took the half-Indian son of another captain to England to be educated. This boy was sold to the captain's brother, a chaplain in St. Helena and sold again when the chaplain was transferred to India. On the matter being exposed, the padre was ordered to refund the money, but he quibbled, demanding a reduction in the refund for "wear and tear." Retailing freehold plots of blue sky had obviously affected his religious principles (and interest.)

## WANTED

By a Gentleman now in Calcutta, two very handsome AFRICAN LADIES of the true sable hue, (by the Vulgar) commonly called *Coffriesses*.

They must not be younger than fourteen years each.

Nor Older than twenty, or twenty-five.  
 They must be well grown Girls of their Age.  
 Strait Limber, and strait Eyed:  
 And have a rational use of all their faculties.  
 The better if a little squeamish.  
 But beware of spot or blemish.

They will be joined in the Holy banns of  
 Wedlock to two Gentlemen of their own Colour,  
 Caste and Country.

A dower is not expected with them.

Nor will there be any jointure settled on  
 them.

As the Master of those African Gentlemen  
 would not wish to have them disappointed, he  
 hopes no Ladies will apply, but those that are  
 really, and truly spinsters, for it would be a very  
 disagreeable circumstance to have their passions  
 wound up to the highest pitch of wild desire, and  
 then have the Banns forbidden in right of a prior  
 claim—No matter whether by a Mogul from the  
 East, or a Hottentot from the West. For in  
 either circumstance it would be equally distress-  
 ing.

"N. B. Any Person that has got such Ladies  
 to dispose off let them apply to the Clerk of the  
 Printing Office, and they will be treated with."  
 (1781)

Stories of gross cruelty to slaves were many.  
 Girls of 15 and 16 were stripped before the other  
 servants, male and female, and severely flogged.  
 There is on record a case of fatal maltreatment  
 accorded to Nasibun, a slave girl by her mistress,  
 Maria Davis, in 1828.

In 1831 the British Government emancipat-

ed all the slaves of the Crown. In 1833 the administration of Earl Grey formally abolished slavery, with effect from the 1st August 1845 but extra time was given to avoid throwing too many slaves on the labour market.

P. J. Harvey Darton, also Isabella Gilchrist, each wrote *The Life of Mrs. Sherwood*, a gifted, pious woman, wife of Captain Sherwood of the 53rd Regiment, who landed at Calcutta in September 1805, where she joined her husband.

She wrote more than seventy books, the most widely known being *Little Henry and his Bearer* (the 'bearer' being, by the way, an ayah.) Little Henry lies in Berhampore graveyard with scores of other soldiers' children. Extreme piety and childish simplicity were the principal features of her books, but they were interesting and had a charm of their own.

Arriving at the Sand Heads, she took a budgerow and when the tide turned "we arrived at a place called Fulta. The tavern at Fulta was kept by a European. It was a decent respectable place. Our expenses were 18 rupees."

Disembarking at a ghat opposite Fort William she "was conducted to an inn, the Crown and Anchor. I had hardly got to the tavern when he (her husband) joined me. I certainly had not far to go to walk to this tavern. We met with great civility at the Crown and Anchor where we remained twenty-four hours. The comparative quiet being most grateful to me. We lived well but the charge amounted to four guineas."

The 53rd Foot later moved to Berhampore

where the Sherwoods had letters from home which cost them upwards of two guineas for extra postage, having been originally sent to Madras.

WILLIAM DOUGHTY

"With the most sincere sentiments of gratitude, begs leave to return thanks to his friends ~~for~~ the liberal support he has met with during the two years past, and further begs leave to inform them and the gentlemen arriving at this Settlement that he has taken that well situated and most extensive House, belonging to the Estate of General Martine, opposite to the College, and the South-west corner of Tank Square, where he has spared no expense in fitting it up for the reception of Families and Gentlemen arriving from Europe, the upper-stations etc. and also his long rooms for the accommodation of large parties, for which purpose proper Assistants are engaged ; and trusts, that as he pledges himself to strain every nerve to conduct the business in every department, with strict propriety, that he will meet with encouragement and support.

"N. B.—W. D. begs leave to observe, that his house in future will be conducted under the title of the Crown and Anchor Hotel and British Coffee House." (1807)

"John Lewis, Exchange Coffee House, respectfully informs the gentlemen of the Calcutta Militia, that public breakfast will be provided

every parade morning in the Exchange Hall, at one rupee eight annas a head—ready money.” (1807).<sup>c</sup>

Captain Thomas Williamson published in 1810 the *East Indian Guide and Vade Mecum* in which he imparts information, warnings, and depicts one phase of British-Indian social life which emphasises much of what previous writers said about Calcutta taverns.

“At that time there was no hotel ~~but~~ a number of taverns which are either of the first rate, at which public dinners are occasionally given, or they are of that mean description which receive all who have a rupee to spend, under the determination of extracting that rupee in some shape or other. The former class is very confined in numbers, but the latter are abundantly numerous, and may be readily distinguished by the promiscuous company, the shabbiness of the treatment, and the excess of imposition imposed, especially on novices.”

“The passengers of every class are expected to reside on shore during the ship’s detention in the roads. Few, indeed, neglect to avail themselves of the opportunity offered of seeing one of our principal fortresses, and of observing the customs of a country, so celebrated in history, and forming so essential a branch of British Empire. If an introduction be obtained, by any means, the usual result will be an invitation to reside with the gentleman, if he keeps house. Otherwise, every attention will be paid in seeing the stranger accommodated, at the best house of that description which admits boarders ; and

which are commonly called "Punch-Houses." This designation doubtless arose from the habits of those who first settled in India, and who, finding spirits, sugar, and limes (a small species of lemon) everywhere abundant, indulged in copious draughts of punch. That beverage is now completely obsolete, unless among sea-faring persons, who rarely fail to experience its deleterious effects.

"In all sea-ports, taverns or punch-houses are more frequented than in places where shipping lies in some distant road or harbour. This occasions them to be more respectable in the opinions of those who keep them, but nothing could reconcile a gentleman, long resident in the country to seek accommodation among them. It would imply a total want of respectable connexions, and, in itself, appear a sufficient cause for avoiding his acquaintance.

"Totally ignorant of the language, and without any guide, it is by no means surprising that so many impositions are practised on our countrymen as soon as they arrived in India. A debash of the lowest order, and of the most crafty disposition, perfectly experienced in all the ordinary requirements of Europeans, and prompt to gratify their desires so long as profit attends the speculation, is ever at the elbow of the novice, serving as banker, purveyor, pimp and interpreter. What more can be requisite to ruin an helpless, inconsiderate youth?"

The author thought well of Calcutta shopkeepers whose reputation for honest dealing has always stood high.



“He who is not a Company’s servant, and is so unfortunate as to possess no letter of introduction, is advised to resort to one of the European shopkeepers in Calcutta, among whom are some most respectable characters, men distinguished for their urbanity, philanthropy and generosity. To one of them the case should be candidly stated and, in order to inspire confidence, a deposit of money should be made, either with them, or at one of the banks. The consequences will be that in a few hours some small tenement will be obtained, either on hire or granted as temporary accommodation and the whole of the articles really necessary will be provided at one or the other auctions which daily take place within the Central parts of the town.”

“The tavern keeper, working hand in hand with the police, (Barrabas in partnership with Ananias) never fails to enquire whether the gentleman has any friends in town, or even in the country? If affirmatively answered, “Mine Host” feels himself tolerably secure of his money; but will probably assert that the friend in town is out of the way and will not be back for some days. Should the gentleman be totally destitute of friends, then comes the rich harvest. Imposition following imposition swells the bill; which if appearances warrant forbearance, is kept back as long as possible, under the pleasing assurance of perfect confidence. In the end, however, a catalogue of items is produced, which never fails to alarm, if not to ruin, the unsuspecting victim.

“Should, unhappily, the guest so far lower himself as to associate with the ordinary company of the common drinking-room, he is irretrievably gone. Quarrels, riots, and inebriety follow, till, in all probability, he becomes subject to the notice of the police. Should his face ever be seen at that office, his admission into any respectable circle would be next to impossible. What with lodging, dinner, wines, &c. of the worst description but all rated at the highest prices, he must be fortunate who escapes under a gold mohur (two guineas) per day. Double that sum is generally charged so that a person starts at the rate of £1000 per annum, at least; while in all probability, no established, or even apparent, provision exists, whereby he may be maintained.”

“Add the allurements held out by the sable beauties, who will contrive means to retail their charms so long as they think money is to be had, and no trifling expense will be incurred. Some fellow who can speak English, and thoroughly understands whatever relates to the interest of the concern, which, among other things, includes thieving, lying, cheating, pimping, &c., is employed to delude the unwary stranger. The first essay is ordinarily made by describing the elegance of the native women, and their great perfection as singers and dancers; and rarely fails, especially with youths under such circumstances, to excite something more than curiosity. The dancing-girls are introduced, and so many fatal consequences follow, that nothing can be more dangerous than this irregular indulgence;

it never failing, first to drain the purse, and, in a few days or weeks, the constitution also."

It has been before shewn, that taverns, punch-houses &c., are by no means places of resort, as in Europe. There is no such thing as a coffee-room, merely as such; unless we consider the few houses of certain French and English *traiteurs* and *restaurateurs*, who occasionally accommodate committees of shipping, or town meetings &c., and who send out dinners to any part of the town, or its vicinity, on terms advantageous to both parties. Therefore, under such exceptions, which are rare, and setting apart the civic operations of the beef-steak clubs &c., it may properly be said, that coffee-house association is unknown in Calcutta, at least among the respectable members of the community. Neither does any corps in the Company's service keep a mess; all the officers dining either at home or in small parties, according as their several fancies or occasion may lead them."

Captain Bellew, in his *Memoirs of a Griffi*, gave some details of his experiences when he landed as a Cadet about 1810.

Landing at the "Ghaut or landing place I went to the Custom House....." "Having arranged matters there I proceeded through the thronged streets of Calcutta to a tavern or punch-house, somewhere in the aristocratic region of Ranamoody Gully, a sort of place of entertainment which, in those days, was quite *infra dig* for a gentleman to visit. However, being a griff, I knew nothing of this, and if the case had been otherwise I should have been without an

alternative. Dirty table cloths, well spotted with curry and mustard, prawn curries, capital beef-steaks, a rickety, rusty, torn billiard table on which, day and night, the balls were kept going, lots of *'shippies* and a dingy bed were the leading features of this establishment, not forgetting the clouds of voracious and well-flesh mosquitoes."

After three days there Bellew obtained an advance of 150 sicca rupees and moved into "four bare walls and a pukka floor in the South Barracks of Fort William."

When Stocqueler's *Old Field Officer* first landed in Calcutta he relates "I was accosted by some very well-dressed natives, apparently of a superior class, who obligingly offered to shew me the best house for the accommodation of strangers, to take charge of my luggage, and even to pay the boatmen. They spoke English fluently and behaved towards me with the most engaging frankness and good humour, the high-sounding titles with which they greeted me seemed only to be the natural consequence of the impression which my dignified presence had made upon their minds. Sometimes, indeed, I was tempted to interrupt them, and to exclaim, "Really, my good Sir, you quite mistake me, I am no Lord, but only a simple Cadet."

"With all my blushing honours full about me, I suffered myself to be quietly marshalled to my temporary residence at Parr's Hotel, the very respectable designation by which a shabby curry-coloured house at the corner of Clive Street was then known.

“Here, however, my adventitious rank forsook me as suddenly as it had been obtained. I again became plain *Mister*. My late flatterers, I found, were employees in the service of the tavern-keeper, their gratuitous kindness was afterwards acknowledged by him in the most commendably liberal manner when he presented his bill on my quitting his hospitable roof. How long it was before this occurred, or how my time passed in this Circean abode I have now little recollection—eating, drinking, and billiards, I believe, filled up the entire day. Fruits of all kinds, and at all hours, ripe, unripe, and over-ripe—liquor of every sort that our inclination or vanity prompted us to call for at meals,—and a most abominable compound of villanous Madeira, sugar and lime juice, called Sangaree, all day long. In this horrible place I must have remained three or four days, when my host recommended an immediate visit to the Town-Major of Fort William.” That, for a lad just sixteen was a good start. He was lucky to have fallen off his pedestal of social exaltation so early; some of our countrymen, loving adulation, remain on it all their days in the country. To be told by a cringing, fawning Indian “You are *such* a good man,” (good for what?) ruins the manhood of many of our people in India. Missionaries love it.

Fresh oysters were advertised by John Morris of Cossitolla at Rs. 3 per dozen. July 1808.

On St. Andrew’s Day, December 3, 1812  
“A numerous and highly respectable party of

Caledonians, accompanied by nearly an equal number of English and Irish Guests, forming a Company of an hundred, assembled at 7 o'clock in the evening at Moore's Rooms, where 'an elegant entertainment had been prepared."

"After dinner there were twenty-two toasts, the regimental band playing a tune for each, and an excellent performer on the bag-pipe, who has lately arrived from the Highlands of Scotland gratified the Company with many select airs on the martial instrument.

"The hilarity and social spirit of the evening detained the company without the desertion of a single individual till 3 o'clock in the following morning: at that time an interval was devoted to dancing, and a few Scotch Reels were executed with a high degree of vivacity. The ~~company~~ then returned to table; and at about half-past 6 o'clock on Tuesday morning, about 18 or 20 jovial souls finished the festivities with *God Save the King* in full chorus." And all that for a modest fifty rupees!

Tulloch & Company, the auctioneers, advertised in 1810 that they would "Pay the following prices, ready money, for EMPTY BOTTLES deliverable at their Ware-house, viz.:—

English Wine Bottles,	Sicca Rs. 4 per doz.
Porter Bottles	" 3 ditto
French Bottles	" 3 ditto
Pint Bottles	" 2 ditto

(It has always been more profitable to fill bottles than to empty them. Quite recently, when bottles fetched one-twentieth of those

prices a British couple were proud to boast about a dismissed servant who offered to work for nothing provided he was given the empty bottles.)

A theatrical performance "With the Tragedy of the Earl of Essex" and the Farce of "Raising the Wind" was to be given at the Theatre, No. 18, Circular Road, the tickets, limited to 200, were one Gold Mohur each. Thursday, March 10 1812.

Prices came down two years later.

### CHOWRINGHEE THEATRE

Tomorrow evening will be performed the Comedy of "The Rivals" with the Farce of "Fortune's Frolic."

Price of Tickets		
Box,	Sicca Rupees	12
Pit	ditto	6

In "*Sporting and Military Adventures*" Major Blayney Walshe tells that he came out with a draft (about the time of Waterloo) and "Landed at Calcutta and we soon found ourselves comfortably installed at a very fine hotel." (He does not, unfortunately, give the name of it.)

His first march was from Calcutta to Chin-surah—25 miles and as some of his kit was missing when he got there, he "asked permission to be allowed to see after my belongings." His company officer assented to this request, and "a few minutes saw me off, mounted on a wiry, but miserably ugly tattü, or native bred pony; they

are very generally used throughout the Bengal Presidency by officers, to carry them out to parades, luncheons, or tiffins—as we Anglo-Indians call them; and in fact wherever quickness and durability are required. They are wonderfully enduring but of comparatively little value, as you can,—or could at the time of which I am writing—procure one of these useful little animals for fifty rupees, (five pounds of our English money) and they will do the work of a horse ten times their value.

“I cantered back to Calcutta in less than two hours, and I need not say I was a happy man when I saw my belongings safely packed and in the hackery and the bullocks moving off with the creaking and screaming vehicle; the driver screwing at the poor animals tails as if he were moving the ponderous machine entirely ~~by his own~~ labours.

“I now began to feel hungry, and recollecting that I had not taken anything since my dinner on the previous evening, I directed my steps towards my old hotel, after I had seen my tattü carefully attended to. The poor pony had done some hard work already. All officers’ horses and ponies are led in the rear of the regiment on the line of march, and any officer who wishes to ride when the men are marching at ease, has only to fall out and let the regiment go on, and when his horse comes up he can mount him. When the “tap” on the big drum calls to march “at attention” he may dismount and run up to take his place in the column, drawing his sword and falling in. In this way the tattü had done the



march to Chinsura; I had afterwards cantered him back to Calcutta, and in the cool of the evening I had made up my mind to ride him back again to Chinsura, that I might be in time to march with our detachment the next morning. Few horses could be got to do so much work, and I suppose, the native ponies being so cheap, one does not care much about injuring them by making them go when required to do so.

"After a very good luncheon at the hotel and a bottle of "fizz," I strolled about looking up my military friends, I ordered the unhappy pony to be again saddled, and it was nice and cool when I started; he took me back with the greatest ease in two hours and a half, just in time for a late dinner at the mess, to the astonishment of the detachment."

There is much in Major Blayney Walshe's book which makes one feel that the letter "J" is missing in one of his Christian names; as Colonel Thornton put it—"Though firearms had come to stay, the use of the long bow had not been altogether forgotten." Were he not a lad of seventeen at the time he might almost be accused of a desire to add a few bars to his Ananias medal, but as time rolls on, memory often gives us roses in December. He certainly owned a fairy-tailed steed.

Of the thousands of British soldiers who marched out of Calcutta on their long tramp up-country, it is possible that not more than one in twenty ever returned. What a record it is!

George M. Gould, A.M., M.D., in *Anomalies*

*and Curiosities of Medicine* (p. 460) must have been able to give Major Blayney Walshe a good start. "Ernest Mensen, a Norwegian sailor wagered that he would walk from Paris to Moscow in fifteen days. On June 25, 1834, at 10 a.m. he entered the Kremlin, after having traversed 2500 kilometres (1550 miles) in 14 days and 18 hours."

"In 1836, he was in the service of the East India Company and was dispatched from Calcutta to Constantinople across Central Asia. He traversed the distance in 59 days, accomplishing 9000 kilometres (5580 miles) in one-third less time than the most rapid caravan. He died while attempting to discover the source of the Nile having reached the village of Syang."

Times change as can be seen by the following:

Thursday, June 7, 1821

*BILLIARD BILLS*

*By Public Auction*

In the first week in July, will be sold by Messrs. Gould and Campbell, all such Bills and Vouchers, given to the firm of Briant and Company, by Gentlemen, Civil and Military, &c., &c., as may not, up to that time; be taken up by the respective parties, who are hereby solicited to adjust these demands against them.

N. B. Particulars will be published on the day of the sale.

Soda water from Scheppe & Co. in Stone Quarts and Pints was on the market in Calcutta in 1810.

**SODA WATER CHARGED WITH FIXED  
AIR, AT A REDUCED PRICE**

MESSRS. GOULD AND CAMPBELL respectfully inform the public that they have received a quantity of SODA WATER, in strong glass pint bottles, in the best possible order; every bottle guaranteed to effervesce when the cork is drawn, and which they are authorized to offer for sale at Ten Rupees per dozen.

N. B. Two rupees per dozen only allowed for empty glass bottles after this date 31st March, 1813.

**BENGAL SODA WATER MANUFACTORY  
MESSRS. TULLOH & CO.**

“Beg respectfully to inform the public, that they are appointed Sole Agents for the sale of the Soda Water, made at the Bengal Soda Water Manufactory, and to assure them that every attention will be paid to have it all times of a good quality. They have just received a supply made from Rain Water, since the weather became cooler, which will be found better than what has been lately offered for sale. 19th May, 1814.”

A writer in *Bengal Past & Present* sneered at “modern Ships’ Stewards, who before leaving Calcutta, lay in a supply of Calcutta aerated water at six annas a dozen, in the firm but humble expectation that ere the Red Sea is reached and the stock of Schweppe reported to have been exhausted the thirsty passenger will gladly purchase the Calcutta product at the rate

he has been prepared to pay for Schweppe's. Would that there were more of such candid trusting creatures in this far too complex world." That was in 1915.

On more than one occasion I have noticed men on board ship giving explicit orders for Calcutta sodas against any of the British and it would be difficult in Bengal to find such flat, stale and uninteresting mineral waters as those that come out of siphons. The poor quality of mineral waters in England hits a man from India very hard.

A friend in Mozufferpore a huge Sergeant Major, 7th Dragoon Guards complained about the local soda being flat and received the following explanation:—

"Honored Enormity,

"This is to inform you that my father he has been ill and unable to make water but in a few days he will be better when he will make plenty of water with lots of gas."

Dr. Wilmington Walford, in his *Autobiography of an Indian Army Surgeon* relates that on his return from the (First) Burma War (1824) he thought he would invest his scanty savings and found himself brought into contact with some rascally sharepushers (which shows how little Calcutta has changed since then) who were hand in glove with the forerunners of the modern Managing Agents who today glory in plundering shareholders with one hand and pilaging them on the other. His good buys turned out to be farewells. Being a man as well as a doctor Walford thrashed one of the crooks in

the firm of Premium, Slump and Piracy. (In that respect Calcutta appears to have deplorably deteriorated). The subsequent legal proceedings deprived Walford of his 'investments'; his money and his job; and a benign Government published in the Gazette a notification to the effect that "Wilmington Walford is suspended from rank, pay, and allowance for the space of two years."

The difference between the old-fashioned highwayman of romance and the modern share-pusher is that one robbed the rich to give to the poor while the broker robs the poor to give to the rich.

In a few months his landlord turned him out, destitute, and with but one rupee left, wet, bedraggled and muddy, he made his way to a punch house somewhere off Lall Bazaar. "Two steps, and descending these, led me into a low, damp apartment, lighted at the further and darker end by a couple of 'chirags.'" Placing his rupee on the table he was given eight annas change and shewn to a room "some steps lower than the last," and damper. The steam of Calcutta ran down the mildewed walls and a wrecked charpoy was pointed out as the bed ..... Cockroaches crept over me as quickly as a sunbeam through a chink, or attracted by the light struck me with a click; rats left their drains. One more sprightly than the rest crept up the leg of my pantaloons. I knew what rats were on a transport when fresh water was hoarded and they wandered about all night in search of it."

After a dreadful night he walked down to the river for a bath, buying on the way "a handful of dates at a bazaar stand where flies and hornets held revelry."

By a piece of good luck Walford obtained employment in "a big ship bound for China." On his return he found that he was reinstated in the Company's service.

Writing of his experiences in Burma, Dr. Walford said "there was no recruiting of the system amid the bamboo thickets and rice fields of the Irrawady" and an attack of dysentery resulted in appearing before a medical committee who "forced me to enter into cognizances that I had partaken of every preparation, simple and compound, recorded in the Pharmacopia, as possessing or supposed to possess curative properties. I felt I could do so with a clear conscience; I was the tomb in which a whole laboratory had found a grave, barring the show bottles in the window."

A brig of 80 tons brought him back to India. For refusing to take 20 grain doses of calomel (just enough of the powder to cover a ten rupee note), to say nothing about croton oil, and, to the annoyance of the senior medical officer, rapidly getting better, Walford was put under arrest, his senior officer demanding that a sentry with fixed bayonet be put over him. That was not done but, as before related, he fared worse among civilians than under the cast-iron discipline of the Army.

In *Scenes and Characteristics of Hindostan* published in 1835, Miss Emma Roberts referred

to the difficulties of travellers who had no friends when they arrived.

"Formerly, strangers visiting Calcutta were dependent upon the hospitality of residents, or were compelled to take large unfurnished houses, there being neither lodging nor hotels for the reception of guests. But the capital of Bengal has become too large to admit of the continuance of old customs, so boarding and other houses of public entertainment have been opened, and conducted in so respectable a manner, that notwithstanding the great difficulty of subduing ancient prejudices, no person, however fastidious, can now scruple to become an inmate of them."

She further states that previous to the opening of hotels it was "no uncommon circumstance for parties with ladies to stay on board a budge-row at a Calcutta ghaut for a week at a time."

A correspondent writing to one of the papers about that time said he had "repeatedly seen well-dressed females picking their way through the slime of the Hooghly River, deposited on the landing when the tide is out, in preference to being carried in the arms (in the absence of a chair) of the delicate dandies (we mean the swarthy ones) with various nameless *agreemens* more easy to conceive than to describe decorously." Another writer denounced the "young cubs in red coats who almost consider themselves gentlemen, who came from Fort William to jeer at these unhappy ladies."

A hundred and forty years ago the Duke of Wellington complained that all Europeans

fifteen years in India had been tempers. That cannot be said today for nowhere is the healthy man more light-hearted than in the Indian Presidency cities. But when men ate and drank to excess (in my time patent medicines were advertised not only to make you eat more but to make you hold more) they were hard to get on with. As Captain Cuttle put it to some of his sailors—"If I gave you the liver wing of a baked angel you'd complain about it."

Owing to the ruin brought about by the insolvency of Palmer & Co. in 1830, there appears to have been a drop in the number of taverns. Spence's was, of course, going, but the Directory for 1834 gives only three others, The Bentinck Inn, Emanbagh Lane, owned by T. Baker, the Exchange Hotel in Tank Square, (T. Barfoot), and the Union Hotel in Waterloo Street, managed by Mr. & Mrs. Wilkinson.

The Albion in Tank Square and the Clarendon in Becher's Place dated from 1838.

The Auckland (later the Great Eastern Hotel) was in Old Court House Street in 1841 and the Clarendon in Raneemoody Gully, formerly Pilots Row, now British Indian Street. 1844.

J. Bennit's Tavern, 1 Becher's Buildings.

T. W. Dalrymple's Tavern, 5 Chitpore Road.

Elly's Hotel, 9 Hare Street (for many years the office of *The Englishman*).

The year 1845 saw a recovery in business. There were in Calcutta 25 Wine Merchants, 14 Bakers and Confectioners (exclusive of two great hotels from whence provisions and confectionery



are also procurable), 9 Tailors and Habit-makers, 13 Boot, Shoe, and Harness-makers, 9 Milliners and Dressmakers, and 12 General Shopkeepers.

1848

Bodry's Hotel 12, Rannymoody Gully

Clarendon Hotel Rannymoody Gully.

T. W. Hynes.

Mountain's Hotel 13, Rannymoody Gully  
(later at 3 Esplanade East.)

O'Brien's Chop House Radha Bazar.

Captain Oliver Jones, R. N., arrived at Calcutta during the Mutiny. "Major Hume and I were room-fellows in Brown's very comfortable family hotel with a large airy apartment, though the air was somewhat muggy, and more mosquitoes than oxygen in it."

"C. S." *Leaves from a Diary in Lower Bengal* came out in the P. & O. Nubia in 1862. On ~~land-~~ing he went to the New Mansion Hotel which he said was very comfortable. That must have been—

Mountain's Hotel 6 Esplanade East

Wood's Hotel 6 Dacres Lane.

Leon Gallais (French) 123 Dhurumtola (The  
Street of Religion  
and Virtue)

Bentinck Bentinck Street

Bengal Hotel 11 Waterloo Street

Calcutta Hotel 14 Waterloo Street

1875

Esplanade (Sen Brothers) 45 Bentinck Street

J. W. Ware was the proprietor in 1876 and in  
1879 or 1880 R. Monk.

A famous, or notorious, tavern stood on the site of the Bengal-Nagpur Railway offices in Garden Reach.

"The original proprietor a low class Bengali, met with a terrible death during the Mutiny in 1857. Thirty or forty sailors belonging to a ship of war lying in the Hooghly at the time were mysteriously ill. The men suspected that an attempt had been made by the keeper of the tavern to poison them, and a party of sailors stole ashore during the night, seized the unfortunate man and hanged him from Kidderpore Bridge. An enquiry was held, but the actual perpetrators of the crime were never discovered."

It is probable that unwholesome food was the cause of the trouble. Quite a number die in Calcutta to-day from meals eaten in doubtful places; even the best hotels occasionally can claim their victims.

Four people nearly died after eating caviare supplied by one of the best of them. One of the victims, after four days in hospital, indulged in rhyme:—

"You're quite all right inside the bar,  
But khubburdar, the caviare!"

Those who believe and assert that everything was cheap in the "old days" before India became a land of needy politicians can find corroboration in price lists of seventy years ago, but they should also remember that the lowest priced articles in the monthly bills were found under the heading of "Pay" or "Salary". The following details kindly furnished by Mr. S. C. Thackrah, a director of Messrs. Kellner & Co., Ltd., will make

many who came through the Straights of Babel Mandeb (the Gates of Sorrow) to the Land of Regrets sorrowfully cast their regretting eyes on high.

		Rs. As.		
Beer	McEwan's	quarts ...	3 8	Per doz.
"	"	pints ...	2 12	"
"	Stone's Bass's	quarts ...	5 4	"
"	"	pints ...	3 6	"
Stout	Guinness's	quarts ...	4 8	"
"	Burke's	pints ...	3 12	"
Brandy	Common	...	12 0	"
"	National	...	14 8	"
"	Beehive	...	22 0	"
"	Dennis Mounie's	...	24 8	"
"	Hennessy's	...	27 0	"

In 1880, Lewis & Co., advertised "Sandoway Cigars (Burras) Imitation Havanas, Imitation Manilas at One Rupee per 100 and Plain Country Cigars at Rs. 1/4/-per 250. Lewis & Co. therefore avail themselves of this opportunity to warn the public to guard themselves from similar and various impositions." (Sic.) And, it is worth remembering that they were made of tobacco—honest tobacco—poor, but honest.

Years ago, in the Gibraltar Garrison Library I found an old book written by a Spanish soldier of no fortune who had been a prisoner of war on board an English frigate. He had stories about forts he had captured surrounded by six glass walls five feet thick, fifty feet high and fifty feet apart which seemed to show that he could, when put to it, well, develop ideas. He obviously chummed in quite happily with his captors and,

with such an imagination, must have been popular. The little bit about him that took the eye was this: "The English have a wine they make from water. They call it beer. It is very good."

When that Spanish fighting man went back home it is probable that his friends believed all his yarns except that about the wine made from water. One is prepared to believe that Ananias occasionally told the truth, and it is fairly certain that on those rare occasions he was more discredited than when otherwise engaged.

Henry the Eighth, who, as the boy said, "had an ulcer on the leg and great determination of character and would not be considered a nice man even in these days," was allowed eight gallons of beer a day. He might almost be considered an authority on embracery but compared with Solomon he hadn't a look in.

In the days when epidemics took heavy toll of British troops in India, beer, free from choleraic and dysenteric germs, undoubtedly saved thousands of lives. During the First Burmese War (1824) it was found that when malt liquor could be obtained the health of the troops always improved. A marked change for the worse took place when spirit was issued instead. Where beer was introduced, the tremulous, yellow-skinned, emaciated spirit drinker was rarely met with. That was stated by Florence Nightingale in her book, the *Sanitary State of the Army in India*.

But beer has its limitations. A naval pensioner complained: "When I drink beer I

gets full-up before I'm drunk. And when I drink whisky I gets drunk before I'm full-up; so now I mix the two together and gets drunk and full-up at the same time."

I wonder how many are left of those old soldiers who remember the day when they were compelled to drink Indian beer? Most of them have long since supped their final draught from Holy Mother Gunga, swept aside like fallen leaves. But some have not forgotten when English beer was not allowed to be sold in the canteen until men wanting it had paid for two quarts of Indian beer.

In such contempt was that held that it was customary for gunners in a *Kutcha* (Mountain) Battery to buy their two quarts of country beer, ceremoniously pour it down the drain and then sit down like rajahs to drink the beer they liked. When this sporting piece of army legislation was withdrawn, Indian breweries, and many comparatively honest British officers said farewell to their best days.

## *SPENCE'S HOTEL AND ITS TIMES*

Historically speaking, a century is not a very long time but the changes in the "Unchanging East" (which changes more than anywhere) since Spence's Hotel came into existence have been amazing. Calcutta has grown from a few villages and one or two Hindu temples to a position which leads it to boast of being the "Second City in the Empire." If that is true it is a pretty bad second. Second best or second worst, it has to be admitted that there is no hotel in Asia, America, Africa, Australia or New Zealand so long established. Shepherd's in Cairo runs it pretty close, being founded in 1841. It was then called the "New British Hotel", taking its present name in 1850—"Shepherd's British Hotel."

In England there is the "Fighting Cocks" at St. Alban's, Hertfordshire, which dates back according to deeds and other documents to the year 795 A. D. The inn "Trip to Jerusalem" at Nottingham dates from 1189 A. D. and it is practically in the same shell as the original. "The Fountain" at Canterbury is perhaps the second oldest in England having been established in 1029.

Chaucer sang of "The Tabard" in Southwark; Shakespeare of "The Boar's Head" in Eastcheap, and Tennyson, (some of whose poems have apparently been taken as models by Rabindranath Tagore) praised "The Cock." Our greatest writers thought highly of taverns and obviously spent much time in them.

In India, where Europeans have no home and leave no memory, quite a lot has been written about John Spence; one gathers, from the recommendation given by General Abraham Roberts, father of the famous Lord Roberts, that Spence was a worthy man.

Recent correspondence with some of his relatives in the firm of John Spence & Sons of Airdrie, Scotland, resulted in learning that he originally hailed from Parisley. "He went out to India alone where he remained and is reputed to have made a considerable fortune."

From a note, unfortunately mislaid, John Spence was with Charles Dawson in the Pollock Street Hotel in 1828. Dawson died on April 23, 1830.

Exceptionally hard times prevailed during the first decade of the hotel's existence. Financial stability crashed through the irregularities of Palmer & Co., the most important agency house in the East. By the time the repercussions had gone across India, insolvencies totalled over £30 millions, "reducing the frugal officer, the widow, and the orphan, to dire poverty." It was fortunate for the public that Palmer & Co. were not more experienced in the modern practices of managing agents of watering capital to increase (paper) dividends, or the ruin would have been greater. "People in Calcutta were poorer than a church mouse," as a Bengali graduate expressed it, and considered themselves lucky if they had one meal a day. Rates in Spence's Hotel were in harmony with the times.

The earliest reference yet discovered, made

by a resident of the hotel was found in the diary of Mary Ann, wife of Captain Curling Friend who brought his ship to Calcutta in 1830. The *Deal and Walmer Telegram* published extracts in 1871, and the *Blue Peter* of July 1930 gave them an encore. Mrs. Friend wrote:—"Anchored off the town of Calcutta on December 30, 1830."

The custom of the time was for married captains to take a house for the period of their stay, so the Friends went to Entally for six weeks. The next entry reads:—"1831. About a week ago we broke up housekeeping and went to Spences Hotel, and on the 26th February we at length set off with a fair wind for dear England."

W. W. Tayler, Bengal Civil Service, 1830-1868, states in *My Thirty Years in India* that he and his wife stayed at Spence's Hotel about 1831. A few years later he left 'Pooree' and "we reached the City of Palaces once more and took our abode at Spence's Hotel. This was the first hotel ever started in Calcutta and was, in itself, a symbol and a warning of the change which was then passing over Anglo-Indian Society." Another reference runs: "In 1863 on reaching Calcutta we dined and slept at Spence's Hotel."

Tayler fell in love with a daughter of the financial magnate Palmer while on his first voyage to India and married her shortly after landing in Calcutta. He thought highly of the character of his father-in-law, an opinion that was not generally shared.

Pig's fat on cartridges and pigheadedness in high places brought about the "Revolt" of the Bengal Army and the death of John Company.



During the Mutiny Tayler was Commissioner of Patna and appears to have been one of the very few with any sense of proportion which did him no good. Mark Twain said "Ain't we got all the biggest fools in Government on our side and ain't that a big enough majority in any Government?" or words to that effect. A victim had to be found; it was better to discredit one man than to expose to the world the cowardly hysteria of the whole of the administration. Wise men know that if you wish to be popular you mustn't be too often right.

Harry Abbott, in *Sonepore Reminiscences* expressed the opinion that "Never was man more worthily entitled to the Victoria Cross than W. Tayler—he saved, not a few lives, but a whole province. Yet his reward in those arrogant, snobbish days, was contumely and disgrace, because he had a vindictive enemy at headquarters." Well, the more the world of India changes, the more it remain the same.

George W. Johnson, who arrived at Calcutta in the early 1830's wrote *The Stranger in India, or Three Years in Calcutta*, gives his experiences with clearness which show that if anything it cost more then, with the rupee at two shillings, (and more) than it does today, to live at Spence's Hotel. Ground floor rooms were Rs. 250, the first and second floors Rs. 350 per month. "These charges include board, except wine, and every other expense, exclusive of a gratuity of a few rupees (five are quite enough), to divide among the servants of the establishment when you leave, as you are expected to find your own servants, except the cook and his attendant. The fare,

attendance, quietude, and regularity cannot be praised too highly. There is a good dhoby who will be recommended by the hostess, and washes at the rate of three rupees per hundred for gentlemen's, children's and other clothes; but those of ladies' at four or six rupees per hundred. From that, and other critics Spence's was not a place where residents were made to feel themselves an incidental nuisance.

George W. Johnson appears to be the only writer who refers to Mrs. Spence, who, like so many others of those days, died young. The *Bengal Obituary* contains the following reference:—

“Here lies the remains of Elizabeth,  
the wife of John Spence, who departed this life  
on the 15th Sept. 1833, aged 33 years.  
This frail memorial is placed here by her husband,  
whom she sincerely loved.”

The *Bengal Register* for 1832 contains the name of John Spence, one of the “Inhabitants” of the “Settlement”, but gives no other details. Two years later the Calcutta Directory is more definite—“John Spence, Calcutta Hotel, Waterloo Street, also at Becher's Place.”

During its history the hotel had many changes of locality, but the present address is its original home. There were two houses, one in Wellesley Place, the other in Becher's Place—now absorbed in Fancy Lane. They were eventually joined together by a building put up in the intervening space.

The Rev. H. B. Hyde, a former Archdeacon of St. John's, was responsible for the suggestion

that Fancy Lane derives its name from having been originally the site of a *phansi*, or gallows. Mr. Hyde conjectured that the gallows stood at the corner where Spence's Hotel is now situated, and the conjecture was based on the fact that the palisades by which the European settlement was at one time bounded, made a sudden detour at this point as if to leave space for a gallows. There is no evidence that executions ever occurred in Fancy Lane; on the other hand, no other explanation of the name has been given. There is ample proof, however, of the former existence of palisades. These were erected at an early period to protect the town from the inroads of dacoits and wild beasts and were not removed at the time of Warren Hastings. The area thus bounded comprised the whole of European Calcutta at the time of the Black Hole tragedy, and it was said that no Indian was allowed to reside within the gates. While the palisades were in no sense a fortification, there was some fierce fighting at various points nearby in British Indian Street and in Mission Row at the time Seraj-ud-Dowla invaded and captured Calcutta.

In spite of the grim history of the site on which Spence's stands, no resident of the hotel has complained about ghosts haunting the premises, and ghosts, according to various Oriental beliefs can always be detected through their feet being turned the other way. It is comforting to know that ghosts are quite harmless until they have drunk blood and as most of the legal tragedies were the result of hanging, no blood was shed, that is, officially, so that not even the

lady who said she didn't believe in ghosts but was afraid of them has ever expressed the least mental uneasiness.

The fame of Spence's soon spread. In 1832, people leaving England were advised—"as soon as the ship reaches Kedgeriee it is always advisable to have a note ready to despatch by the post-office boat which there comes alongside informing your friends of your arrival, or to Mr. Spence, desiring him to retain for you a suite of rooms."

A sixteen-year old cadet related how pleased he was to find boatmen at Kedgeriee selling "Fruit, eggs, and milk we bought and O! the luxury after so long confinement on ship fare. The fruit (often the 'luscious' jack) was exquisite; the milk was unfortunately much smoked—the eggs were rotten."

A cadet who arrived in 1835 told a different story. He had been eight months on the voyage on board a "country ship" (one not a regular liner) and lived sailor fashion on salt beef, hard biscuits, and water stinking with animalculae with one table cloth to last the voyage.

"And then, dear reader, picture to yourself a snow-white table cloth on which was drawn up in beautiful array, ham, eggs, (fresh for a change) a superb kind of fish from the salt-water lakes called a bectee or cockup, fried, boiled rice, muffins, tea, coffee etc. Plaintains, radishes, small prints of butter in a handsome cut-glass vessel of cold water, and a bouquet of flowers in the centre gave a most cool and refreshing appearance to the table.

"A khidmagar, or native waiter, stood behind each of our chairs with a chouree (fly-flapper, a cow's tail or otherwise) to keep in awe the flies, and a punkah waved pleasantly over our heads—and all this service for two cadets!"

When these lads arrived in India, some of them barely in their 'teens, they were generally scandalously neglected. Their orders were to report to the Town Major who never took the trouble to meet them on arrival. The result was they kept away from Fort William as long as they had any money. After being accommodated in the South Barracks they were eventually sent to the Cadet Institution at Baraset where they found themselves in the devil's own company. The more daring spirits got into the slums finding a punch house in Cossietola (The Shambles, now Bentinck Street) in a room that was a cross between a hen coop and an oven, where they picked up the Order of the Predatory insect, and were duly initiated as D'Itchers. Putting away a full grown man's dose of liquor, they went all out like men, and when money and credit ran low, reported arrival and started soldiering.

Even when they were neglected on arrival, or in books of memoirs written after retirement, they praised the quality of Calcutta beef steaks. Many tourists, (particularly "those English who come from America,") a country where town-dwellers seldom see fresh meat, freely admit that Calcutta beef is the best they ever tasted. Mrs. Fay said the same about Bengal mutton.

An anonymous writer described the arrival

of a sailing ship off Chandpal Ghaut in the 1830's: "At length the traveller finds himself ashore where he is in peril of being torn to pieces by the palanquin bearers. If he is wise he scrambles with all possible speed into the first one. Our new arrival has introductions to several residents of Calcutta, but the days of promiscuous hospitality have passed away. (They always had.) Lord William Bentinck (the Clipping Dutchman) and the failure of large firms have led to retrenchment all round. The traveller, therefore having tumbled into a palanquin, as primed by a fellow voyager, shouts "Bara potch Khanna" which is the name by which all the bearers know Spence's Hotel. Out of the ruins of former hospitality three hotels have sprung up in Calcutta—Spence's, Benton's, and Bodry's. Off these the first is far and away the best. It is managed by the Proprietor, John Spence, who may fairly be said to have originated hotels in Bengal. For the sum of Rs. 6 per diem, Rs. 40 per week, or Rs. 100 per mensem, he feeds and houses the guests comfortably."

Wellesley Place, in which Spence's Hotel and the Telegraph Office now stand, was constructed in 1803 under the orders of the Marquis Wellesley, Governor-General, and brother of the Duke of Wellington. That, and Government Place, North, cost £3,433. Without permission, he built Government House at a cost of £250,000 where he occasionally lavishly entertained Calcutta merchants whom he unaffectedly despised.

There had hitherto been no passage between Old Court House Street and Council House

Street, excepting a winding gully known as Corkscrew Lane. ' An old-time poet whose sweetheart lived there said it was a "vile lane whose odour makes me sick." From the state of these narrow streets fifty years ago that statement leaves no room for doubt. Corkscrew Lane now forms part of Fancy Lane.

From the Directories available it looks as if John Spence and his hotel wandered about Calcutta like a dog at a fair. Established at 4, Wellesley Place in 1830 in 1834 we find—"J. Spence, Calcutta Hotel, Waterloo Street also at Becher's Place. Apparently the hotel and its coffee house were run at separate addresses, the latter moving about more frequently than the parent establishment. The coffee house was the headquarters of ship captains where "all kinds of shipping news were procurable, letter bags made up and refreshments were available at a moment's notice."

## THE ROMANCE OF ICE.

In these days of electric light and fans, refrigeration, pneumatic tyres, and acceleration it is difficult for those who have not had to do without these comforts to understand what life was in India in bygone days.

It was not until Spence had been three years in business that ice was brought from America. Up to them it had been collected in small quantities and hoarded like gold dust, placing it out of reach of all but the wealthy. When it came on the market the usual scoffers predicted all sorts of trouble and illness. One unknown (to me) penned the following:—

“Full many a man, both young and old,  
Is brought to his sarcophagus  
By pouring water, icy cold  
Adown his warm aesophagus.”

Stocqueler relates:—“Among other achievements with which the government of Lord William Bentinck was rightly credited, the establishment of a commerce with Boston (Massachusetts) in fresh water ice is to be named. It was pretty well known that the southern parts of America and the Island of Cuba had long enjoyed a supply of that valuable commodity; but, in their wildest dreams, the luxurious people of India never went the length of supposing that American ice could be sent out 15,000 miles under any conditions. Judge then, of the surprise which was created by the arrival of a cargo;



Mr. Tudor, of Boston could scarcely bring himself to believe that it would be possible to preserve the ice on board ship in a warm climate for four months. An accident resolved his doubts. One of his ships bound to the West Indies had gone ashore. Four months elapsed before she was got off and the cargo removed. It was then discovered that there had been very little wastage indeed. Tudor at once determined to send ice to India. Lining the lower deck and ~~hold~~ of the ship with tan or cork, excluding the air, and providing means of drawing off the water from the melted ice, he contrived to send out his experimental cargo. The expense was slight, for American vessels had generally gone to India in ballast.

"It was an hour after dawn 'one morning in spring'—a time of the year when the cool air and fogs of February are suddenly exchanged for the hot winds—that a 'faithful' domestic came to my bedside with the strange intimation that a ship (the Tuscany) was off the town laden with *burruf* (snow). I wished the 'faithful' in regions of a very different temperature—regions more akin to the climate of Bengal in the month of May. But the khitmagar persisted in his assertion and exhibited an unwonted anxiety that I should rise. What could he mean? Ice from America! An entire cargo!

"So I at once jumped up, bathed, while my horse was being saddled, and then rode down to the ghaut. Engaging a paunchway, a small native wherry, I pulled on board the Yankee clipper and verified the asseverations of my

servant. I was allowed to peep into the abyss which contained the treasure. There it lay! in square masses of the purest crystal, packed carefully and scientifically. To add to its beauty, a quantity of rosy American apples reposed upon the surface of the glacier.....I hurried off giving my khansamah a wicker basket and a piece of green baize and sent him off with a rupee for a pound of ice. He soon returned with half the quantity.

"How is this?"

"Master, all make melt."

"Did you wrap it well up in the cloth?"

"No, Sahib, that make ice too muchee warm."

"Did you close the basket?"

"No, Master, because that make ice more warm."

"Then the ice had the full benefit of sun and air?"

"Idiot!"

"This was followed by a pothogue, and an order for breakfast instanter.

"How many Calcutta tables glittered that morning with lumps of ice! The butter dishes were filled; the goblets of water were converted into miniature Arctic seas with icebergs floating on the surface. All business was suspended until noon, that people might rush about to pay each other congratulatory visits, and devise means for perpetuating the ice-supply. Everybody invited everybody to dinner, to taste of claret and beer cooled by the American importation. And never was the editorial pen employed upon a more delightful theme.

“By a singular antagonism of emotions, my heart was warmed by the refrigerating visitor. Lord William Bentinck took counsel of some of the leading citizens, and a public meeting was called to inaugurate a subscription for the erection of an ice godown. Every man who could afford it had a box made for the reception of his wine, his butter, and his meat, with a capacious zinc-lined well in the centre. Captain Rogers, who brought out the first venture received a gold ~~cup~~ as the guerdon of his merit. Mr. Tudor was so pleased with the success of his first venture, that he thenceforth kept the principal towns in the three Presidencies well supplied. I believe that 1500 tons of fresh-water lake ice of America are now consumed in India. In the hospitals it is invaluable.”—*Memoirs of a Journalist* (pp 103-6).

Bentinck was generally sneered at for being the “Clipping Dutchman”, and he certainly was an economical economist. One of the stories about him aroused widespread indignation—that is he was said to have proposed selling the Taj Mahal, the finest memorial in the whole world to the memory of a woman, by auction for the value of the marble.

Perhaps he was not less romantic than one of the Dukes of Buckingham who saw no beauty in the Taj—but wanted to explore the basement to see how the building was drained.

Another Bentinck story is the Bhurtpore gun. In those days the capture of a gun was looked upon as a sort of Victoria Cross. This great gun was so large that two full-sized artillerymen could

crawl right down the bore to the touchhole. The "Clipping Dutchman" had the gun broken up and sold for old iron. The 2nd Bengal Europeans, who captured or found it were much embittered by this act of military sacrilege, and it is doubtful if the Treasury benefitted to any great extent by the sale. They valued guns in those bow-and-arrow days ; to "Save the Guns" was a creed up to the Boer War.

But, give the devil his due he did much for both sick and well, by encouraging the importation of ice.

The mentality of the old-time shameless gleaner from the pagoda tree can be gathered from the experience of Lord William Bentinck when on a tour of inspection. He asked a certain Collector what he made by his post, and was met with the startling answer from the irritated official—"Every damned pice I can", and this servant of the Honorable John Company contemptuously turned his back on the Governor-General. And—public opinion generally applauded the Collector!!

An advertisement of the "Assemblies" to be held at the Old Court House in November 1797 stated that ice would be obtainable at those entertainments. This ice came from Hooghly, forty miles up the river from Calcutta where ice manufacture was quite a well organised business. The supply was uncertain and the charges exorbitant. But the ice made by "the projector of the Hooghly Ice Preserve" was being advertised as late as 1831.

In the big centres they may have enjoyed,

occasionally, partial relief, for Gladwin states that as far back as 1590 Hindus knew the art of cooling water by the help of saltpetre.

Emily Shakespeare was in Murshidabad on July 12, 1814, and took supper with one of the wives of the Nawab of Bengal. "The table appeared to groan under the weight of food. There was abundance of Ice which at this season is a variety no less than a luxury, and to which we were indebted for cool wine and water."

~~was~~ Dr. Walford, writing of 1827 tells us that "ice in Calcutta was a shilling a pound."

The *India Gazette* for November 25, 1833, contains the following announcement:

#### *THE IMPORTATION OF AMERICAN ICE.*

To W. C. Rogers Esq., of Boston.

Sir,

"The importation of American ice into Calcutta is an enterprise so novel and beneficial that I cannot resist the desire of expressing to you my sense of the spirit and skill by which it has been planned and executed. I beg that you, under whose superintendence it has been conducted, will do me the favour to accept the accompanying small token of the gratification which I have derived from the success of this extraordinary undertaking. A few months ago such a project as that which you have realised would have been regarded as visionary and I have no hesitation in declaring to you my opinion that its accomplishment must be attended with great public benefit. I sincerely hope that you may find ample encouragement to persevere

in your speculation, to comfort the inhabitants of this great and populous City."

I am, Sir, your most obedient and humble servant.

(Sd.) W. C. Bentinck.

Calcutta, 22nd November, 1833.

Mr. Rogers was apparently in Calcutta at the time and received from the Governor-General his Lordship's letter and a cup manufactured by Hamilton & Co.

(*Calcutta Monthly Journal*.) February 27, 1840.

The following advertisement appeared in the Calcutta "Englishman" on March 30, 1839.

*"ICE HOUSE. NOTICE"*

"The fruits by the last arrival are now exposed for sale at the following prices:—

Apples,	8 for a rupee.
Grapes,	2 rupees per lb.
Ice,	3 annas a seer.

N. B.—No Credit is given at the Ice House.  
February, 27 1840. C. Ladd. Agent.

An interesting advertisement appeared in 1868.

*"ICE ! ICE ! ICE !"*

"The best and cheapest pure machine-made Ice is now procurable at the Government Manufactory, Lucknow, at two annas per seer. The Government is now in a position to offer this invaluable luxury to the public at a price which defies competition and special attention is invited to the fact, that their principles are small profits and quick returns. Observe—two annas per seer

only—Only Two Annas per Seer. Wholesale purchasers liberally dealt with. Apply to Government Ice Manufactory, Lucknow. Vivat Regina!!”

A servant, told to wash the ice before bringing it to the table, was seen to be washing it with soap.

“Kim” of the *Statesman* related a story about a lady, sitting on her verandah caught sight of something large and white shining in the sun in ~~her~~ garden. She fetched her topee and went out to look. It was a large block of ice. The khitmatgar was sent for and rebuked for throwing away so valuable a commodity. “That, Mem-sahib,” said he, “is yesterday’s ice. It is stale.”

### THE JERUSALEM

An announcement in Alexander’s *East India Magazine* for 1836 is of interest as showing the original location of Spence’s Hotel to be in Wellesley Place.

“Coffee house—Notice has been taken in the public prints of a scheme of Mr. Wetherill to open a Coffee-house in Calcutta. The plan is to connect with Spence’s Hotel an establishment similar to that of the Jerusalem Coffee-house in London, where all kinds of shipping intelligence will be procurable, and letter bags will be made up, and those who want refreshment may have them at a moment’s notice. The idea is good, and we are glad to find the scheme strongly supported by the mercantile community. The resort to the hotel is now so great that, we hear, the premises originally taken by Mr. Spence, have been found too

small, and in consequence Mr. Wetherill is about to remove the establishment to Loudon Buildings, and it is in that range of buildings that the Coffee-rooms are to be opened."

In some more or less anonymous correspondence during 1725 the following reference to a Jerusalem Coffee House appears in *Vestiges of Old Madras*, vol. II p. 219.

"After having expos'd to View an Advertisement premising the Exhibition of a Monster lately brought from the East Indies ; it will doubtless be expected from me that I should either gratify the world with a Sight of this strange Creature, or give some substantial Reasons for not doing it.....

'A Copy of the publick printed Bill:—

*'Monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens, cui lumen ademplum.*

'This is to inform the Curious that there is lately arriv'd from the East Indies a most surprising Monster, above 17 Hands in height ; he was taken on the Coast of Coramandel, near a place called Mad-ass-apatam, where he had lived in a Wood for some Time, and (in a Manner) reign'd King of the Beasts..... Those who knew him best agree to name him from the Creature he nearest in some Points resembles, the monstrous Indian Elk. Further Particulars concerning the Brute may be had at the Jerusalem Coffee House in Exchange Alley in London ; and he is to be seen from Ten to Six every Day, besides Sundays, at his Den in St. Mary-Ax."

Situated off Cornhill is Cowper's Court, named after the City family of which the poet



was a member. Here was the famous Jerusalem Coffee House which survived until 1879, when it made its way for Jerusalem Chambers. It was, says William Hickey in the second volume of his *Memoirs* (p. 97) "the general resort of all those who had anything to do with India." He went there in December 1768 to meet Captain John Waddell of the *Plassey* and arrange for his first voyage to the East which took him to Madras and Canton and back to London in April 1770. Captain Waddell told him that "he had just taken leave of the Court of Directors," a function at which it was necessary to appear in full uniform, and that he must send his chest down to the ship at Gravesend as soon as possible and be on board himself in a week's time. Six years later, in December 1776, we find him going twice a week to ascertain the dates of dispatch of "the early Madras and China ships." In January 1777 he went to interview Captain David Arthur of the *Sea Horse*, the ship which took him to Calcutta to begin his career as an attorney of the Supreme Court. He was given a cabin with three other passengers and learned from the purser that he must forthwith send one hundred guineas for a seat at the captain's table, which was double of what he had paid to Captain Waddell.

So great was the renown of the Jerusalem Coffee House that when John McDonald, an enterprising dancing master who came out to Calcutta in the *William Pitt* in 1790, opened a Public Exchange at the corner of Council House Street and Dalhousie Square on the spot now occupied by the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank House. He

did not forget to provide a 'Jerusalem Room' where the Captains of the Indiamen lying in the river and the country Captains might foregather. In 1800 the building was taken over on lease by Lord Wellesley for his shortlived College of Fort William which started on its career on the 24th November. McDonald's speculation, says Hickey (Vol. IV. p. 238), did not answer his expectations; and he was glad to obtain so good a tenant. In 1836 we hear of "a plan to connect with Spence's Hotel an establishment similar to that of the Jerusalem Coffee-house in London, where all kind of shipping intelligence will be procurable and letter bags will be made up....."

"Lastly, when the Great Eastern Hotel was rebuilt in 1858, it included among its attractions the 'Calcutta Jerusalem Subscription Assembly and Reading-rooms' for merchants, brokers, and captains of ships."

A description of the "Jerusalem" taken from "Life at Sea" gives some idea of what an intending passenger was up against when he decided to go out East.

"Reader, were you ever at the Jerusalem or at the Carolina Coffee-house? If not, you probably never have made a voyage from London to the East or West Indies, or hired an apartment in any of the three-masted prisons that daily sail for these regions, or enjoyed the prospect of being exposed, during several months, to the miseries of Life at Sea.

"The Jerusalem Coffee-house is the chief rendezvous for the masters of East India trading-

vessels, who are persons of great consequence in Cowper's Court, but of none anywhere else. When a stranger gets among them, he sees a considerable number of tolerably well-dressed men hurrying about with a mercantile air, and every moment hears a repetition of the words—cotton, indigo, rice, insurance, bills, and freight. He is constantly jostled by people who are occupied in seeking for others whom they have engaged to meet on business. A waiter stands in one corner, to inform strangers at what time the different captains will visit the coffee-room, and in what part of the Commercial Road their lodgings are. The walls of the apartment are placarded with hand-bills and printed cards, setting forth when different ships will sail, and describing their "engraved plans" of which lay upon the tables and benches for public inspection. One vessel is to leave port positively in six days, another is to be off with all possible despatch, a third has nearly the whole of her cargo on board, and a fourth has still two cabins disengaged, for which immediate application must be made by those who want them. An uninitiated person is completely taken in by all this. He secures a passage in one of the ships, and pays its price into the hands of the commander who assures him that they will sail precisely at the time specified in the advertisement. The period arrives, but the vessel remains in dock, and her declared passenger lingers out weeks, and perhaps months, in daily expectation of her departure. On the other hand, the experienced voyager, after reading the bills at the Jerusalem Coffee-room, goes to the City canal to look

at the ships, and to judge when they will be ready to put to sea. The first he finds under the hands of the caulker, and without a rudder or main-mast; the next has just been hove down, because she has a leak in her bottom; the third is discharging some old ballast and clearing out her hold; and in the fourth, a carpenter is beginning to build a poop, and to partition off the cabins between decks. He leaves town, and makes a tour of the continent, or takes four or five weeks' shooting in Scotland, and, on his return, finds that some of the ships are only preparing to leave port, and that at least half their accommodation still remains at his disposal.

"The time a man spends in awaiting the departure of a vessel is usually one of the most useless and unpleasant periods of his life, even when he has to employ part of it in the necessary preparations for a long voyage. They are all of a disagreeable kind, and tend to remind him of the various sacrifices he is about to make in going to sea. He visits his acquaintances, and regrets that he will soon lose their society. He goes into the country, and while wandering in the fields, recollects that he will shortly be deprived of the pleasures of exercise and rural scenery. He strolls through the town, and is annoyed at the prospect of being excluded from the enjoyment of the conveniences and amusements which it affords. He enters a coffee-room and reads the newspapers, and reflects that he will be in total ignorance of what goes on in the world during the whole of his anticipated voyage.

"At length the hour of his embarkation

arrives, and a messenger comes to announce that a boat is in readiness to convey him on board ship."

Such experiences would make the ordinary traveller feel that the world is not round—it is merely crooked.

In 1835 or 1836 Spence was Steward of the Calcutta Town Hall on a salary of Rs. 250 per month. He must have done well because he went Home in 1837. At that time the Town Hall records show that he personally owned furniture in the building to the value of Rs. 30,784-7-11.

Among the details is one for 300 single and 100 arm cane-bottom chairs costing Rs. 1,222-13 which shows that they were but little cheaper then than now.

As time rolled on the business grew into J. Spence & Co., Hotel Keepers, Wine Merchants and Commission Agents, with an address at Government Place, East Side, most probably on the site now occupied by the Great Eastern Hotel.

In the records of the District Grand Lodge of Bengal there is a reference to "John Spence, hotel-keeper, aged 48." As a member of Lodge Marine, he attended the Inauguration Meeting of Lodge St. John, (No. 486 E.C.) when it was founded in 1840. With him were Scott Thomson, the chemist, Spink, the bookseller and other local celebrities.

An advertisement in the *Englishman* which appeared in May 1844 stated—

**"GUINNESS EXTRA STOUT"**

From Messrs. Sparke and Moline  
Sole Consignee of GUINNESS, SON & CO.

“N. B.—The above selected by Mr. J. Spence in London, with particular intention to suit this market.”

J. SPENCE & CO.

Later in the same year the advertisement appeared in the same form with the addition of

*“LONDON BOTTLED ALLSOPP'S  
PALE ALE.”*

For Spence to have been in England in time to advertise in the Calcutta papers in May 1844 leads one to conclude that he left India in 1843. The fact that he was able to go Home twice in five years when officials were lucky if they got away in ten speaks for itself: that must have had something to do with the decision of the Calcutta Town Hall Committee to reduce the Steward's pay from Rs. 250 to Rs. 150 per month.

Losing the catering for the “Gold Mohur Dinners at sixteen rupees per head exclusive of drinks” would have meant a lot so no complaints were made about the cut in salary. It was decided that he be “permitted to make over charge to his partner in the firm of Spence and Company, Mr. G. R. Elcock, on condition of his drawing no pay for the office.”

“On Mr. Spence's return in 1846 he resumed the office of Steward and applied for the salary formerly attached to it, but his application was negatived in consideration of the profits derived by him from the privilege of supplying provisions, etc., to parties held at the Hall and of his having once resigned that salary.” A fact that that

gentlemen apparently accepted with becoming resignation.

"The following was the Establishment entertained by Mr. Spence in 1849:—

		Per Mensem		
		Rs.	A.	P.
4	Khalassies at Rs. 7-2	28	8	0
4	Bearers, at Rs. 6-4	25	0	0
1	Mehter	5	0	0
1	Bheestee	6	0	0
	Choonawallah	6	8	0
	Carpenter Mistry	10	0	0
	Mally	4	0	0
2	Coolies	10	0	0
2	Peons	14	0	0
1	Butler	14	0	0
1	Khidmutgar	7	0	0
Total		130	0	0"

In 1847 a correspondent in Chamber's *Edinburgh Journal* expressed the opinion that "English Society in India has lately been undergoing numerous pleasing ameliorations. While rapacity and sensuality have been disappearing, integrity and refinement have been correspondingly on the advance."

For that, John Spence must be entitled to a large share of the credit. To establish a respectable place where strangers could obtain good food and clean surroundings where formerly there were nothing but low haunts was a great public service. If he made large profits, he made them honestly, which is more than can be said about

officials who were mostly as corrupt as greed and sticky fingers could hope for. And one can make sure, that then, as now, rascally officials (of whom in the upper grades there are few, if any today) and merchants would not dream of speaking to Spence outside his hotel for fear of breaking their caste.

For some years Spence's Hotel enjoyed the privilege of supplying ices and cooling refreshments to the "thirsty *Sahib* and *Mem Logue* in the Eden Gardens."

Not only the *Sahib logue* but sailors, loafers and the scum of the city gathered there to swear, drink and fight, while crowds of disorderly people enjoyed themselves. One can imagine the scenes with thousands of seamen in port and what a nuisance they were to those who made use of the Gardens, not as a place for drunkenness, but as a promenade.

The cyclone of Wednesday, October 5, 1864 put 'paid' to the "Kiosque." It happened on the first day of the Pujas and is still considered to have been the worst storm that ever swept over Calcutta. Damage was done to the extent of £3 millions sterling. Large ships were blown ashore and wrecked and Spence's Refreshment Room was carried away in pieces. The papers expressed the devout hope that it would not be erected in the same place being nothing but a disgrace to the City.

After 1849 little of personal information has been found regarding Spence's connection with the Calcutta Town Hall. While it lasted it must have been a small gold mine to the caterers ; we



read that, in 1865, had the proposed fee been charged for the use of the Town Hall for concerts, the finances would have been better off by Rs. 6,800. In the 1890's the Municipality had a fixed charge of Rs. 100 for the use of the hall, plus the cost of lights, police and attendance. Making a rough guess it looks as if there were two concerts every week. Our forbears were musical in those days and knew how to enjoy themselves in amusements provided by themselves.

Before and long after the Mutiny, troops stationed in Dum Dum and Barrackpore were generally relieved every month. Those marching out of Calcutta used to halt at Spence's Hotel to give themselves a chance to straighten things out. A few officers might be picked up there. When their baggage was loaded, a farewell drink was gulped down, and, with the drums and fifes playing a lively air, the red-coated column started on its way. Elephants, horses, and bullock transport followed the troops through the narrow foetid streets to Chitpur, "the city's Northern Kalighat, notorious for three centuries of human sacrifices". Once clear of the city, the fine, well-shaded Barrackpore Road made marching a pleasure. added to by thankfulness at being out of the overcrowded Fort into God's fresh air.

Eight miles along the road troops halted for half an hour at Cox's Bungalow. In a home letter a young soldier told his mother about remembering something left behind in Spence's Hotel. He galloped back and was able to re-

join his company before it marched into Barrackpore.

Troops proceeding upcountry left Barrackpore the next day. "At Pulta Ghat, seventeen miles from Calcutta they crossed by ferry and said a long farewell to the cliques, extravagances and pests of the city on the Hooghly."

They continued their long tramp past Chinsurah, which the Dutch held for 180 years, when they gave it in part payment for Java—brass for gold. Shrewd traders were the Dutch in those days and they haven't changed much since. Were the places marked where British soldiers have died, the Grand Trunk Road and other of the great Indian highways would be flanked by one long stretch of tombstones.

Those underpaid sons of England, who were rationed on an unchanging diet of tough beef and raw rum for 365 days of every year, were forced to live in the most appalling conditions of overcrowding and insanitation. As Florence Nightingale put it in her *Observations of the Evidence Contained in the Stational Reports Submitted to Her by the Royal Commission on the Sanitary State of the Army in India*, (Reprinted from the Report of the Royal Commission) (1863)—"Like Mahomet and the mountain if men won't go to the dunghill, the dunghill, it appears, must go to them."

It used to be said, with approximate accuracy, that if the sewage from the Elephant Park didn't flow into the hospital drinking water tank, the authorities took steps to make sure that it did.

Well, (as John Masefield put it), "They followed their mercenary calling, and took their wages, and are dead" and forgotten.

To those thousands who marched upcountry, that short halt at Spence's Hotel, just one mile from Fort William, was long remembered as the point where contact with Home life was severed for ever.

In *An Aide-de-Camp's Recollection of Service in China, a Residence in Hong Kong, and Visits to other Islands in the Chinese Seas*, by Captain Arthur Cuninghame, Aide-de-Camp to Major-General Lord Saltoun, (1844) he states: —

"We had the good fortune to put up at a most comfortable hotel, though an exceedingly close and hot one (Spence's) where the tempting supplies of ice which we met with, though pleasant to the taste, caused, by a too free indulgence, a severe illness, which I endured during the first days of our voyage to Madras."

A matter of interest is: "We attended the theatre once, which was a neat building, situated in Park Street, and able to contain six hundred persons ; one thing was particularly striking, but which, upon slight reflection cannot but be considered as highly advantageous in that country: there were no upper tiers of boxes or gallery, the absence of which was a great benefit ; but in their place, above each box, were suspended punkahs, a rope from each of which, passing through a hole above the door, wafted a gentle breeze through the entire house, keeping people in a proper train of body, to allow their minds to be

diverted by what they saw and heard. "Norma" was to have been performed, but the untimely death by cholera, which was raging in Calcutta at the time, of one of the principal performers, prevented its being so, and a comedy was substituted—the company were French." Vol. 2. pp 259-60.

"Peregrine Pulteney and Julian Jenks, two Cadets, were presumed to have landed at Calcutta about 1845. The author states: "When the two griffs entered the hotel (Spence's) the first thing they did was to raise a vehement cry of "waiter," which not being productive of any visible effect, they began cursing and swearing." Following a servant, "to their great astonishment, they beheld themselves in a long room where some dozen or fifteen gentlemen were engaged in consuming cold meat, hot potatoes, and bottled beer."

At breakfast the next day the two lads "Paid great attention to the universally adopted mode of making up an Indian breakfast mess—a preparation consisting of a little butter, two or three green chillies, a pyramid of boiled rice, a ditto egg, and a pound of dried fish, with salt and cayenne at discretion, all mashed up on a hot water plate and baled down the throat with a spoon—no contemptible provender, be it observed, for a gentleman in good health."

*Peregrine Pulteney*, by J. W. Kaye. Vol. 2, p 37 and p 52.

The most notable of Spence's Hotel patrons was the future Earl Roberts who, as a cadet, left Southampton on February 20 1852, crossed Egypt

and reached Calcutta on April 1, a matter of forty-two days.

This is what the great little man had to say about Spence's:—

“On landing, I received a letter from my father, who commanded the Lahore Division, informing me that the proprietor of Spence's Hotel had been instructed to receive me, and that I had better put up there until I reported myself at the Headquarters of the Bengal Artillery at Dum-Dum. This was chilling news, for I was the only one of our party who had to go to an hotel on landing. The infantry cadets had either been taken charge of by the Town Major, who provided them with quarters in Fort William, or had gone to stay with friends, and the only other Artilleryman (Stewart) went direct to Dum-Dum, where he had a brother, also a gunner, who, poor fellow, was murdered with his young wife five years later by the mutineers at Gwalior. I was still more depressed later on by finding myself at dinner *tete-a-tete* with a first-class specimen of the results of an Indian climate. He belonged to my own regiment, and was going Home on medical certificate, but did not look as if he could ever reach England. He gave me the not too pleasing news that by staying in that dreary hotel, instead of proceeding direct to Dum-Dum, I had lost a day's service and pay, so I took care to join early the following morning.”

That is all the young soldier could say about the place his gallant old father had recommended. If that is one of those testimonials that would fail to allure anyone, it is something to claim that

such a Bilkul Bahadur—the absolutely brave) has been one of the hotel clients. Oscar Wilde confessed that he had “dined in all the best houses in London—once,” but it was for a different reason that the future idol of the Army put up at Spence’s, once only.

A recruit for the Bengal Civil Service who sailed round the Cape in one of Green’s ships in 1869, taking five months on the voyage, wrote some of his experiences in *Life in the Mofussil*.

“With a feeling of really wild delight, I once more put foot on shore.

“A few minutes in that curious conveyances, a palki gharry” (resembling a palanquin on wheels) sufficed to convey me to Spence’s Hotel; and I shall not easily forget the lordly sense of power with which I ordered two fresh eggs for breakfast. During the last month of our voyage a hen had confidently laid an egg, to which each of the eighteen lady passengers appeared to have some special claim. But the judicious steward dropped his apple of discord on deck, and thus avoided a second and very much exaggerated edition of the Trojan War. But great was the lamentation over the fall of that egg, and here I was able to order two at once, and to follow, if required.”

•William Walker, who in 1865 under the caption of “Tom Cringle” published a Series of Letters reprinted from the *Times of India* with the title of *Jottings of an Invalid in Search of Health*, paid a first visit to Calcutta. He landed there on 11th September, 1863, having left Bombay at 9 a.m. on the 29th August. As a lad of

twelve he was serving in the China Seas and sailed out of Penang from 1821 to 1823 in a man-of-war engaged in the suppression of Malay piracy, eventually settling in Bombay where he remained for twenty-nine years. His remarks on the River Hooghly and Calcutta hotels are worth quoting:—

“From False Point we took our departure, on the afternoon of the 10th September apparently right out to sea, and about 8 o'clock p.m. made the light of the Outer Pilot Brig; having ranged pretty close up to her we hailed, and obtained the course to steer which would enable us to pick up the next brig, which we did with great exactness. Thus are the pilot brigs stationed like a line of finger posts, directing the true course to the navigable mouth of the Hooghly, until the navigation is such that the last brig furnishes a pilot; not like the rough old sea-dogs we pick up in the British Channel, but a smart, gentlemanlike man, whose leadsman even ‘thinks no bones of himself’. The latter takes all the soundings, and cries them out, sailor fashion, until the most dangerous part of the river is passed, when he is relieved by one of the ship’s leadsmen. The Hooghly is far straighter than I had imagined, and like all rivers of a shifty nature, deep water is always to be found alongside bluff banks, and as far as a stranger may judge, there is not a tithe of the difficulty in navigating it as exists on the Indus. I think it, however, fair to say that our steamer, entering the river, as she did, on the turn of the flood, came up with it to Garden Reach (where the P. & O. Company’s

wharf is situated) in one tide. A more lubberly mess of taking a vessel alongside a deep water wharf, and that vessel with her steam up, which the harbour master (or his assistant, I know not which) made in our case, I never saw. We only had to move about 100 feet, but the operation consumed two mortal hours, and how much longer after I left I know not, for I got wearied looking on, so jumped into a boat and landed. The P. & O. Company should let their own officers do this work, and thus save such useless detention. Directly the vessel comes abreast of Garden Reach, which is 2 or 3 miles below the usual anchorage, a Custom House officer comes on board, as in the Thames, inspects your luggage by a knowing, cursory glance, and with a courteous bow tells you that you are free to go on shore with bag and baggage. Close to the wharf are plenty of shigrams—here called gharries—with one, and some with two, horses attached; fare, Rs. 2 to Calcutta, two miles distant”.

He wrote “I took up my abode at Spence’s Hotel, which is supposed to be conducted on European rules, yet I could not get a pair of boots cleaned, although my servant offered to clean them, if they would only lend him the brushes and blacking! When informed of this I asked the manager if such a preposterous assertion was true. Yes, it was!—they expected gentlemen to bring their own blacking! After asking if it would not be equally reasonable to ask them to bring their own beds, I left him; a model manager for a ‘Limited Liability Hotel’ as



this is. The table is well kept, and full of good company at breakfast and dinner. At all other times it is as silent as a Trappist monastery. When I first arrived there, at 5 p.m., I asked for a cup of tea, as I was far from feeling well, but I could not have it because they had no milk! In a word I was not impressed with the good management of this much lauded caravanseraï. Perhaps these trifles would not be worth the trouble of noting, but as we Bombayites are about to start a model hotel I record these trifling facts for the benefit of its promoters; and above all let them have a reading room, where strangers, in a strange city, may band together for social converse, and not be, as I was, like a lost dog in a fair, and thus fairly driven away from a city which has no doubt many redeeming points for the entertainment of visitors."

The genial writer was obviously a sick man, for he had something equally unpleasant to say about the Great Eastern Hotel, where on the ground floor was a range of shops, all owned and run by the hotel which, during Christmas and the New Year, constituted one of the gayest sights of Calcutta, being dignified with the designation of the "Hall of all Nations". Mr. William Walker, referring to this, said that; "A ragged beggar may go in at one end with a week's growth of stubble on his chin, and rags on his back, but let him possess the 'universal medium' he may be shaved, have his hair cut, get a hot bath, fitted with new clothes, cut in the first style of fashion, new boots, new hat, and oh, new sensation! a good dinner. And thus be turned out of the other

end of the building from where he entered, a finished swell of the first water. Should he be a *Pater familias* he can buy a new crinoline for his wife, together with bonbons and toys for his children! It has its coffee rooms, billiard rooms, dining rooms, bed rooms, wine cellars, and every description of provisions which travellers will do well to select from for a journey. They have also a steam engine to grind coffee and flour; they also make all sorts of cakes and ginger nuts; and bake excellent bread. The coffee room is nicely furnished (as are the whole of the different departments), but the coffee room servants are inattentive, dilatory, and dirty. I quote from my note book as follows: I had to wait half an hour before I could get a cup of coffee and then in small cups, without milk, dirty table cloth, and dirty knives. I called the attention of the European manager of this branch to the facts related, and he chides the servants, so I dare say he will recognise the circumstance. Here is a city, in its surrounding vicinity reeking with green fodder for cattle, yet having a pretentious hotel like this who tell their customers, at a quarter to six in the evening, that they can't have milk to their coffee!"

That reads like a sharp piece of criticism but William Walker would have had to live another thirty years before he would have found good butter and milk on any Calcutta table. Forty and more years ago both were abominable, but, to-day, there is a supply of pure butter and milk that can hardly be equalled anywhere. The Australian and New Zealand Butter is most

certainly better than can be obtained from the big grocery stores in England, where even the best New Zealand butter tastes as if some deteriorating substance has been added. New Zealanders ought to take that up after this war comes to an end, and find out what our incorruptible food inspectors get out of that.

In 1878 Spence's Hotel was in the hands of J. Andrews, assisted by Arthur Welldon, who married one of the barmaids and afterwards took over the Esplanade from Monk. The "Jerusalem" coffee room at No. 2, Fancy Lane being under the management of Fred Barber, a worthy fellow long connected with catering in Calcutta and Kurseong.

Andrews must have been the first to instal a lift in Calcutta. That in the hotel was wound up by a coolie. Men smoked in private as if they were ashamed of it, going away into corners where ladies would not see them. Smoking in their presence showed rank bad manners, the feminine attitude towards it being like that of King James I who said it was "the insidious breath of Satan—a custom loathsome to the eye, hateful to the nose, harmful to the brain, dangerous to the lungs." So while the ladies were being slowly cranked up in their ten minute trip to the top floor, their men lighted Burma or Trichonopoly cheroots and waited patiently for them to appear. Cigarettes were unknown, or looked upon as 'foreign.' No man used the lift for fear of being classed as effeminate.

While on the subject of lifts, there is the story of a man who went with his grown-up son

for a short holiday in New York finding accommodation on the twenty-first storey of a huge modern hotel.

After the pictures they went for a walk, then to a night club arriving back about 2 a.m. to find a notice—"Elevator out of Order."

"The old man said he would sleep in a sedan chair. "Come on, Dad," said his son, "We'll do it a bit at a time. We hain't gotter work today."

Reluctantly they climbed and climbed until at the 19th landing the old man walked to a chair and threw himself into it. "Come on, Dad, only a few more stairs. I'm about done too, but we'll manage them all right."

"Sorry, Son, but I've some bad news for you!"

"How in Hades can that have happened?"

"We've left the keys downstairs."

Few hotel habitués but have had the same experience.

Poor as the hotel lift may have been, Spence's in one respect was up-to-date, for in 1882 the telephone number was 2.

Spence's Hotel has been a Limited Liability Company more than once. What happened when one company disappeared and another was formed is difficult to say. The Directory continued to keep the name of the hotel in its pages. One feature is worth noting. Spence's Hotel must have been one of the first English concerns to recognize the value of co-operation with Indians in business. In the 1860's Baboo H. L. Mitter was one of the Directors, perhaps the

first Bengali to be in that position in European business house in India.

The blatant boosting of the 1883 Calcutta International Exhibition created no end of a stir. One of the promoters was Joubert, a Frenchman domiciled in Australia. While in Calcutta, with the reins round his back, he rode a fine horse, a method of going about "on the topside of a European horse" which attracted even more attention than the advertisements. He loudly asserted that no fewer than 8000 Cornstalks were coming to see the show; the Maidan was half covered with tents to accommodate them. In those days retailers of plots of blue sky knew less than they do now about the gentle art of misrepresentation, but they were busy enough to help on the road to ruin those who suffer from that infirmity of mind which leads to believe all the boastful humbug they are told, or see first in print.

Some prominent citizens got into the black books of Society by letting their houses at profiteering rates and submerging themselves in the suburbs. Jack Andrews, like many others who believe they are building a mound when they were digging a pit, trebled his rates. Old residents left; others stopped calling in for drinks, the swarms of visitors could hardly be counted in tens, and the result was that the Delhi and London Bank foreclosed on the mortgage and turned poor Andrews into the street. Well, no man goes so far as he who doesn't know where he is going.

The Bank was lucky in finding Charles Broomfield to take over the hotel and agree to

pay the liabilities. Tall, spare, with natural good manners which had been polished while serving as barman in the P. & O. he left the Great Eastern with a small host of friends. Then, and for many years, much of Calcutta business was put through in Spence's bar. With few other amusements for eight months in the year, Broomfield found money-making easy.

In 1886, a little over a year after taking over, he brought out his half-brother, Alfred Manning, who had also been a P. & O. steward. Mrs Manning acted as housekeeper and as both were conscientious, Broomfield decided to retire in 1891, particularly as his health was poor.

In 1893 Alfred Manning and R. W. Lawson were managing Spence's. The next year Lawson, whose failing was that had he been a barometer he would have pointed always to Heavy Wet, was turning into a hopeless failure. He went, and poor Jack Andrews came back to work as a steward in the hotel he once owned.

It is curious that while Broomfield spoke correctly, Manning treated the alphabet to what airmen term a pocket. And Manning's pocket had a hole in it between the letters G and I. Aspirates, so far as he was concerned, did not exist. At tiffin and dinner he would be seated in the centre of the long dining room table, (the unsociable small tables were not then in fashion,) and lay down the law, butting in which such personal details as—"I owny 'ad 'arf an 'am sangwidge in me 'and," supremely unconscious of having said anything out of the way. Unlike 'Honest' Jim Thomas, M. P., it was not a case

of dislocated aspirates such as I once heard on the wireless when that incorruptible patriotic working man and Cabinet Minister, welcomed the Prince of Wales with—"We 're hall very 'appy tersee yore Ryal 'Ighness 'ere."

Many who disregard aspirates make up for that with expletives but a bad word never escaped Manning's lips. He and his delicate deaf wife were 100% respectable, a striking proof of Earl Birkenhead's dictum—better be blameless than brilliant. Strange to relate, Manning seldom lost a chance of ridiculing a Scot, or anyone with a pronounced accent which showed that he had something of a musical ear but was not blessed with the gift of hearing himself as others heard him.

A Scot, newly arrived in the country, heard a man at the table ask for cabbage. "Is that the Hindustani for "cawbidge?" gave Manning enough amusement to last a week, while he could hardly express his scorn for the Caledonian who spoke of his commanding Officer as the "kerrrnul."

After the war it may be that a complete educational course will contain lessons in voice production from pupils' own gramophone records, and deportment taught by the cinema.

One occasionally finds a Bengali clerk who has been long employed in a jute mill speaking Dundee English, but never an Indian who dropped his aitches.

Manning had the true hotel manager's mind. If his best friend wrote for accommodation and the hotel was half empty he would be given the

worst room at slightly higher rates than those paid by strangers. One finds too that shipping companies get rid of the worst berths first. Wise travellers avoid booking too soon in consequence.

A successful hotel manager should be as destitute of sentimentality as an Indian zemindar. He meets too many bilks and bounders, men who prefer to ask a stranger the time to wearing out their own watch by looking at it, yet who waste all they can by leaving on lights and fans and getting the best side of the management by hook or crook. Any man who asks himself—"If it is our duty to help other people, what is the duty of other people?" will not only refrain from doing a lot of harm but live a happier life. So far as hotels go, some cynic expressed the opinion, more accurately than poetically,

"Man wants but little here below

When dining a la carte ;

But when it comes to table d'hôte.

He wants it all, right from the start."

More is lost by believing too little than by believing too much and Manning possessed the gift of acting on tips from friends in the know with the result that he made money with both hands. To some extent he was popular owing to the fact that he did not pretend to be anything but an hotel keeper. Destitute of swank, he lived as cautiously as when working as a steward in the P. & O.

In 1909 a Company was formed to take over Spence's with a capital of Rs. 315,000 and Manning decided to retire.



A proposal that he should mark his departure by giving a farewell lunch to the new Company, met with such general approval that all the regular patrons of the hotel with their friends were invited so that they could show their appreciation of unprecedented hospitality. Up to then he had never been known to stand anybody a drink so the gathering determined to put down with a strong hand cases and cases of champagne. There never was such a time. Even Manning took more than he ought in that free-to-all booze-up, being carried away by the warm remarks of all his friends. More better, as some of our Bengali friends say, the pleasure was great because he felt that it would not come out of his own pockets.

Syndicates have hard hearts. Not only was he billed for the tamasha at full rates, but ordinary hotel rates were charged for a double room from the time the business was handed over. He could not have been more surprised and hurt had he been kicked and robbed at a Bible class. To pay fifty times more for liquor than he had ever done in his life was a cruel blow. It ruined all prospects of enjoyment he had looked forward to on his secondclass trip Home. If ever a man realised that India was a Land of Regrets, he did.

Manning was not the only one who, having left India, forgot all about the friends he left behind. Nobody appears to have heard from him until he replied to sympathetic letters over the death of his only son in the Great War.

On June 8, 1922, the *'Daily Mail'* gave brief

details of his death and later of his estate which was valued for probate at £74,000.

As there had been a heavy slump shortly before his death, it is possible that he left India with £100,000 which, considering his lack of education, was a remarkable achievement.

Some years previously he had brought out his nephew, Charles Broomfield, who was as cautious in money matters as his uncle, but better educated, and totally inoffensive. It was hoped that he would be put in charge of Spence's, but the syndicate possibly believed that men who scrounge for *bacsheesh* in a dining room or wash up dirty plates in a scullery must be capable of running an hotel, so R. W. Lawson came back and E. Marcon, a Mauritius Frenchman who was an exciteable bundle of nerves, were installed instead of a man who had been a mess secretary or one who had lived in hotels all over the world. They know where the shoes pinch, knowledge the ordinary hotel steward never acquires.

Then came C. F. Bowyer, formerly in the P. & O., and later manager of the Bristol Advantage was taken of the Company-promoting ramp after the (first) Great War, to float a company on the old body of Spence's. The capital was Rs. 500,000 of which Rs. 375,000 was said to have been paid to Bowyer for the goodwill.

Unfortunately for the shareholders the Company's solicitors two of whom were on the Board of Directors, were also the solicitors for the landlord, a wealthy Marwari. The Bible says, "No man can serve two masters," but Calcutta

legal gents can not only serve two but serve them out too.

For a time the hotel was in charge of men who would have been rejected by a shorthanded pirate skipper; that and the absence of Bowyer most of his time gave great hopes to the solicitor directors that the concern would go "phutt" and few inquiries made. In Calcutta financial circles anything can be done with impunity, social exaltation shielding crooks while cowardice makes their victims afraid to say or do anything. Calcutta people let lying dogs sleep. The auditors reported a bad state of affairs and I was asked to postpone for six weeks my departure for home so that I might straighten matters out.

It took long to get rid of a bunch of scoundrels, not all of whom were employees. In one fortnight eleven cases of robbery were reported. When six British on the staff were sacked, there was no other case of dishonesty in eleven years. Luckily I was able to push the old directors off the board, and when they went management was easy but it showed how necessary it is to know men well before you respect them.

In August 1942 the Royal Air Force came down like a wolf on the fold and took over the old hotel just as it stood, for an Officers' Mess, turning out ship captains whose ships had been torpedoed, and soldiers on leave after service in the line, who considered they had as much right to live there as others in the Services. The resultant difficulties in keeping the business going, the impossibility of replacing furniture and fittings even at five times the original cost,

almost brought to an end the oldest overseas hotel in the Empire. At great cost to Government one set of fighting men was turned out to make room for others, by no means more deserving.

After five months in the hands of airmen the hotel was de-requisitioned and it took three European women and twenty Indians a little more than ten weeks, working every day in the week to make the place habitable although other matters connected with this disaster to the hotel had not been adjusted for a further half-year.

## *GREAT EASTERN HOTEL*

In the 1830's David Wilson ("Dainty Davie") had a confectioner's shop in Cossietolla (Bentinck Street) where society gathered for dainty dishes. He opened the Auckland Hotel at No. 1 Old Court House Street, in 1841 and today, as the Great Eastern, it is the second oldest hotel in the overseas British Empire.

W. W. Tayler, B. C. S., in "Thirty-Eight Years in India" appears to have made one of the first references to residing there. On page 286, Vol. I. he states—"On our return from the Cape of Good Hope at the latter end of 1842, we went at once to rooms at Wilson's Hotel where, the first night of our arrival we experienced in the dead of night the unpleasant sensation of an earthquake—not the only one I have felt in India. As we were sleeping at the top of an unusually high house, the sensation was not pleasant, and there was a great desertion of beds by the pale-faced occupants, but no catastrophe."

Sir William Howard Russell, the famous war correspondent paid a visit to Calcutta after the Mutiny. He arrived at the end of January 1858 and put up at the Bengal Club.

The Auckland Hotel aroused his admiration in spite of the gharrywallahs calling it Wilson Hotel. "In one large house there is an attempt to combine a tailor's, a milliner's and dress-maker's, a haberdasher's, a confectioner's, a hardware man's, a woollen merchant's, a provision

dealer's, a grocer's, a coffeehouse-keeper's establishment, with a hotel and other trades and callings. I should say, from my experience, the hotel suffers from the amalgamation; but it is a great advantage to have at your feet all you want, though I must confess I could not manage to get a chop one rhorning for breakfast below stairs."

The "Multiple shop" which did not meet with Sir Howard Russell's approval, more than likely originated in Calcutta and was unsuccessful mostly because it was in advance of the times. Under other names the Great Eastern Hall of all Nations covers the world today and should rank with Khaki, Sam Browne Belts, and Puttees as offsprings of India. Doesn't that look as if we are not so very backward after all?

Sir William Russell's reference to the shops run by the Great Eastern Hotel leads me to tell a story.

When Sir Frederick Roberts was Commander-in-Chief, Calcutta was the capital of India and therefore the headquarters of Government during the winter months. Church Parade on Sundays in Fort William was much of a Society function. All those not in uniform attended in top hats and frock coats. After the service, important personages gathered outside the Church for a chat, while ordinary folk stood round and gazed.

The Great Eastern Hotel brought out Tommy Hayes to run their shirt department. He was a first-class man at his job and never forgot it.

Sundays in Fort William with the red coats,

band and brilliant uniforms took Tommy's eye. As soon as he could afford it he went in for a white top hat and frock coat and mingled with the crowd as though born to eminence. Pushing himself to the front, he raised his hat to the Commander-in-Chief who shook hands, and regretted being unable for the moment to recall his name.

"Made your shirts," said Tommy, delighted but slightly deferential.

"My dear," said Sir Frederick, to Lady Roberts, "let me introduce to you Major Schurtz."

The Calcutta Monthly Magazine for June 16, 1862, gives this information:—

"Messrs. D. Wilson & Co's firm assumed the title of "The Great Eastern Hotel Company Ltd." with a capital of 15 lakhs in 6,000 shares of Rs. 250 each. It was established in 1835, (Sic). Mr. D. Wilson who was otherwise called "Dainty Davie" held 1,500 shares in this Company.

Then we read: "David Wilson purchased land in Old Court House Street and Ranees Moody Gully formerly "Pilots Row" (now British Indian Street) in 1851 with existing shops and carried on the business of a hotel-keeper under the name of the "Auckland Hotel and Hall of all Nations." Fourteen years later, September 10, 1865, he floated a Company which he called the "Great Eastern Hotel, a Wine and General Purveying Company Limited."

"By a curious mistake the company was described in the conveyance as the Great Eastern Hotel Company Ltd., instead of by its original title of the "Auckland Hotel and Hall of all

Nations." All the money was not raised at the time and it was stated that Wilson took a mortgage on the properties by paying the difference."

According to newspaper reports "There were various agreements extending the time for the repayment of the purchase money, but before repayment was completed the company, in 1886 went into voluntary liquidation for the purpose of reconstruction, and a new company under the same name was formed. There has been produced an agreement for sale dated February 8, 1886, whereby the old company and its liquidators agreed to sell the properties to the new company. One of the terms of sale was that the new company should pay the balance of the original purchase money secured by the mortgage, and this was paid to a Mr. Crew in favor of the new company, and in this reconveyance the old company and its liquidators joined."

When people talk about the "Unchanging East" (which seems to change more rapidly than other parts of the world) they are partly right. In India, old names stick. That is why the Great Eastern Hotel is still known to coolies and taxi-wallahs as "Wilson Hotel".

Many strangers have driven about Calcutta for an hour or more cursing the gharriwallah and his grandmothers for countless generations because he could not find the Great Eastern Hotel. One would have thought that those who managed the concern for nearly a century would have taken the precaution of making this little difficulty known, but business men generally miss the obvious. They may see much but observe little.



In the 1880's, and probably for years previously it was the custom to serve meals in the street to people who pulled up outside the Great Eastern Hotel in gharries.

Lewis, an advocate or pleader, called every day in his palanquin, a place was reserved near the hotel entrance, where he was served in the palkee with a rupee tiffin—steak, or chop, bread and two vegetables, and, of course, a full peg.

The new verandah over the footpath in Old Court House Street was having its first coat of paint when I arrived in 1883. The ground floor was occupied by various departments where, it was said, a man could walk in at one end, buy a complete outfit, a wedding present, or seeds for the garden, have an excellent meal, a full peg for ten annas, and if the barmaid was agreeable, walk out at the other end engaged to be married.

Each department was run by managers, important people who dressed to perfection, smoked handsomely carved meershaum pipes, or the finest cigars. Shirley Tremearne asked where they bought their requirements; all said they got everything from the hotel. Unable to produce receipts they were lost—so were their jobs.

Christmas was the great time of the year there. Parties from Government House sallied out to play Tommy Dodd, or take chances in raffles for articles difficult to sell. Perhaps no better sign of the change in custom is when Lord William Beresford, Military Secretary to the Viceroy—(actually to three Viceroys and he overtopped the lot) picked a quarrel with an American skipper and took him outside to have three

rounds to see who was the better man. A wonderful man was "Lord Bill," ("Brassfoot Sahib" as he was called by Indian soldiers and servants) for men used to walk into Government House, and wake him up to borrow money.

At that time the Managing Director was Robert Blackburn\* Turner, manager of the Ghosery Cotton Mills. There is a brass tablet to his memory in St. Paul's Cathedral, Calcutta.

In 1887 there was a branch of the Great Eastern Hotel at Allahabad managed by Mr. and Mrs. Skeaf who believed they had a job for life. I stayed there once—not twice.

Few business men made so unfortunate a start in India as Shirley Tremearne, who claimed descent from one of the oldest families in Cornwall. Born in 1848 he came to Calcutta in 1868 or 9 to join his brother in the firm of Tremearne, Day & Co., finding on arrival, that the firm, and his brother had vanished as completely as if they never existed. On his beam ends, he was forced to take the first job that came along on less pay than the average of those meanspirited days. He often told me that all he drew was seventy-five rupees a month in the Accountant-General's office in Rangoon, and Rangoon was a far more expensive place to live in than Calcutta.

\*Transferring later to the Calcutta Currency office, he attracted the attention of Rivett Carnac, who started the Calcutta Town Band in 1863, an outstanding man of fine character, who recommended him to Sir Richard Couch, Chief Justice of Bengal. This led to an appointment as private secretary, a post he filled under two succeeding

Chief Justices, Sir Richard Garth, and Sir Comer Patheram, for all of whom he many times expressed profound admiration. He must have been a success for he eventually became Assistant Registrar of the Calcutta High Court, where he learned much about the crooked ways of the law.

In 1891 he gave up that appointment to become the Managing Director of the Great Eastern Hotel. Those were the days when boarders lived there for Rs. 90 per month in the summer and Rs. 150 in the winter, the drawback which prevented men living there all the year round was the charge of four annas for soda water which could then be bought wholesale for four annas per dozen, (14 ounces bottles too), which gives one some idea of the small margin upon which men then worked.

Tremearne told me how easily he became managing director of the Great Eastern Hotel and started up the ladder of financial prosperity. An old gentleman living in the hotel complained that a pint bottle of claret was corked. The steward, who probably knew no more about wine than he did about Heaven, took a good sip and said it was near enough; the manager supported the steward, and the board of directors saw no reason to reverse the decision of their staff. Bitterly angry, he told everybody how scandalously he had been treated. One of the last men he went to was Shirley Tremearne who ironically suggested that he should turn out the board of directors. Irony is often dangerous particularly when used against strangers. No wise man should indulge in that luxury on the telephone. Mr. J. A. Jones;

the genial editor of the *Statesman* used to relate one of his experiences as a Municipal Commissioner. Some absurd proposal had been put forward on a par with the idea of hiring the British Navy to fight for India after the British packed up for good, Jones, thinking to kill it dead, ironically proposed something equally ridiculous. To his surprise and consternation, both resolutions were seconded and carried.

Something similar happened over the pint bottle of claret, for one day the old grumbler asked Tremearne if he would care to be Managing Director of the Hotel as he, the growser, had bought enough shares to oust the existing Directors. Tremearne accepted, so out they went.

Eminently suited for the position Tremearne started to pull the Great Eastern Hotel out of the mud. So far as that goes, that was his story, but it is a poor story that has no sequel. One man's story is no story.

Once firmly installed on the hotel *gadi* he sat in state at the head of the long table where his pungent humour, caustic irony, poetical quotations and wide knowledge soon established him as a dining room pundit. Tremearne was good-looking, of more than middle height, heavily built, with a habit of mirthlessly displaying a whole set of teeth which looked too good to be true. He was tender on his feet and walked as if his conscience pricked him after his feet had been boiled before the peas were put in his boots. Always well dressed, for dinner, in the hotel he affected a white shell jacket, expensive studs and links, heavy gold chain with several pendants

looped over a gold-embroidered crimson cummerbund with two gold tassels hanging down the outside of his left leg.

"Kim" (Henry Newman) used to tell a story about Shirley Tremearne befriending a Jew who had been wrongfully jailed. After effecting his release, he fed, clothed and housed him until money came from England. On leaving India the Jew begged Tremearne for one of his photographs, to be kept as a memento.

A striking feature of Tremearne's was a bushy, blueblack beard which showed up against a dead white skin. The Jew often remarked on it, and on reaching England, he extensively advertised a hair restorer.

"One fine morning an advertisement flared across half a page of the *Englishman* announcing the glories of this newly discovered hair vigour. It was illustrated by two figures; one, an anaemic looking young man as bald as an egg; on the opposite side was Shirley Tremearne as "AFTER". Tremearne, known to everybody was furious. He demanded the removal of the offending picture but J. O'Brien Saunders, 24-stone editor-proprietor of the *Englishman* was not going to throw away twelve half pages and the series went on to the end."

J. O.B. Saunders was an autocrat if ever there was one. Poor "Kim" often spoke of the days when he was on the *Englishman*. If anything annoyed Saunders he would cut Kim's pay from 500 to 300 a month. Three or four months later the old rate of pay might be restored, but no backlash. "Didn't you say anything?" I used

to ask. "What was the good?" "said Kim, "you could do nothing with him."

Henry Newman was the most versatile journalist India ever produced. For nearly eighteen years he wrote a column a day about Indian social life, Indian mentality, soldiers, sailors, shikar, snakes, alligators and on all subjects from botany to lost treasure. The two greatest of all subjects he had to avoid, politics and theology, also the two lesser—love and crime, yet there was always something in his columns to interest. Keen on soldiering he served with the Indian army in Mesopotamia (where his knowledge of Arabic saved him from having his throat cut while lying wounded) and in the Third Afghan War which was all hardship and discontent. Newman was a sufferer from asthma and with that, as in other matters, mental and physical, he was 100% fortitude. I enjoyed his friendship for more than thirty years.

He had a fine row of decorations even for these days when men with less than six are looked upon as nothing but measly teetotallers. (This medal business is overloaded and must sink now that infants in arms have been in the firing line and shared casualties with trained soldiers.) After the Last War to End War, and Hang the Kaiser hung fire, Newman was a lance private in the Calcutta Scottish. On parade one day his nine medal ribbons took the eye of an Inspecting Officer who asked, "Where did you get these?" and passed along the line filled with information when Newman said, "Ranken's, Sir." (Ranken & Co. being the premier military tailors of the

East, established 1770.) (That advertisement is not paid for.)

That reply brings to mind a happening at one of the big Government factories which was to be inspected by an important Brass Hat. Everything was burnished for the occasion. The Superintendent, a Colonel, and all his office staff had on their best clothes to show how hard they worked. A few minutes before the Big Gun arrived, a mechanic, who looked as if he'd crawled through a mile of greasy chimneys, stood at the gate to enjoy a breath of fresh air. To the Superintendent's way of thinking he ruined the landscape; "Who are you?" he demanded.

"A Welsh Baptist."

"Who are you working for?"

"A wife and five kids."

It is a good answer which gives away no information, the sort that is most appreciated in the House of Commons and other haunts of Ananias.

Without looking for it, trouble is always easy to find in hotel or boarding house. Far too many boarders firmly believe that a fortune is made out of them; others, like W. S. Gilbert's "King Gama," ask—

"Oh, doesn't your life seem dull and flat

When there's nothing to grumble at?"

In hotels can be found, the peculiar members of the human race; discontents, malevolents, and lunatics. Old bachelors who, when they have their change of life become old maids; diet cranks who put away meals big enough for six starving labourers, and buy tonics to improve the appetite.

There may be the same proportion of people who claim to like blunt speech; there are fewer who say they like plain food; both are liars. How many men and women have died from taking to heart (and stomach) *Punch's* advice on "How to be Happy though Married—Feed the Brute," is impossible to conjecture, but it must run into millions.

Perhaps it was his own fault that the Managing Director became a target for hostile criticism. In those days the small, unsociable tables in hotels were not installed; the more friendly long one down the centre of the dining room was the fashion, and when Tremearne gave Gargantuan feasts to friends from upcountry while permanent residents had little to please capricious appetites jaded by drink, liver troubles, boils, prickly heat, and boredom—well, he was asking for it.

And this is what happened. J. A. Dalton, of Thomas Cook's, used to relate it with great gusto; he was living in the hotel at the time and naturally said most about it.

One Sunday Tremearne was entertaining to tiffin half a dozen choice spirits to hors-d'oeuvres, turtle soup, pate de foie gras, asparagus and ices, washed down with extra dry champagne, (none of your plebeian drinks where shareholders had to shell out; it is never too soon to spend their money). Further down the table the permanent boarders sourly faced tureens filled with potatoes boiled in their jackets, with boiled beef and brinjals and some more or less doubtful curry on the bill of fare.

The discontented faces below the salt, and



the just-audible growls of the boarders were as pleasing to Tremearne as the roasting odours of the fatted calf to the Prodigal Son. His combative spirit led to making a few apropos poetical quotations (at which he was particularly clever) but which, as a phase of conversation are almost as exasperating as proverbs used to justify a dirty bit of rascality. Even the cleverest cannot always score and win but there is a good chance of winning if you are careful not to triumph. As a rejoinder a nasty jibe came along. One of the boarders held up a long slice of boiled brisket and asked if he might recommend a prime bit of buffalo undercut straight from the Tangra skinning platform.

To be caught by the ravages of hospitality while showing off to friends was more than an upper cut. A repartee is something you think of a day after it should have been uttered and all Tremearne could think of was to give the offender notice to clear out at the end of the month. Then the worms turned savage. With one accord those below the salt and the simkin pushed back their chairs, and with an abundance of ammunition started independent practice with the boiled spuds. Acting up to the slogan—save me from my foes—the Managing Director, in spite of tender feet and the handicap of more waist than less speed, made good time towards the open door. After that his entertaining, like his dirty linen, was attended to at home for he never dined at the hotel again.

A Chinese philosopher is credited with the aphorism that it takes thirty years to establish

an error and sixty to disestablish it; mankind has an infinite capacity for assimilating error and an equal incapacity for eradication. Hitler put it differently: "The greatest improbability is the most certain," it strikes the imagination.

About forty years ago someone stated that Shirley Tremearne founded *Capital*, our Journalistic Pagoda Tree; since then few seem to know that *Capital* had been in existence two years before he had anything to do with it. The paper was started by William Harold Targett, a character if ever there was one, of wide experience from bill poster to Blondin, the celebrated tight-rope walker, pearling on the north-west coast of Australia, Gillanders Arbuthnot's Seebpur timber yard, assistant in Thacker Spink's and advertising manager of the *Statesman* to being a successful journalist. Wrongly believed to be an Australian he had all the Australian disregard for tradition, was no respecter of persons, and after joining the Mustard Club had evidently been weaned on vinegar for he owned a tongue that could shave a porcupine. He started six or seven journals before making a lucky shot with the *Asian*, a sporting paper, which first appeared in October 1878. It ran right up to the Great War. *Capital* came out on November 6, 1888, and it was not until 1890 that Tremearne began to take an interest in it.

It was not through the Great Eastern Hotel that Tremearne became so prominent in Calcutta business circles, but mainly because of his connexion with *Capital* as he could and did write

what he liked and suppress what paid to keep out. He often boasted of being paid 10,000 rupees for his legal opinion but that was not accurately defined. He was for years the leader of the Mercantile group in the old Corporation of Calcutta where he was famous for incisive invective. Few knew better the marvellous efficacy of blunt speech or had more courage in using it. Curiously, while he could cheerfully make the best of other people's troubles, he always consulted Joyatishi, an Indian astrologer in Moti Lal Seal Street before entering upon any important undertaking.

Colonel James Wyness who was long associated with Tremearne on the Calcutta Corporation, each seeing the truth from a different angle, therefore eager to knock the other right out, relates that when Charles Allen (later Sir Charles) was Chairman of the Corporation, there was a General Committee, a powerful section of the Municipality; at one of the meetings Tremearne so raised the ire of the burly Chairman that his false teeth fell out.

I always found Shirley Tremearne to be a genial cynic, destitute of 'side', full of toleration, fond of reminiscing, and must give him credit for being the most powerful personality connected with hotel life in India. He retired to Bangalore in February 1921 and died there on July 7 1923, within sight of his seventy-fifth birthday.

Shirley Tremearne was the most outstanding character ever connected with hotel management in India. At one time, Mr. F. E. James (now Sir

Frederick) who, when much in the public eye, told a Rotary Club gathering that he had started life or worked when young in a Brussels hotel or tavern. His publicity rested mainly on a chapter written by him while employed by the Young Men's Christian Association in which he boasted of chasing the millionaire Gandhi over the Punjab to do *pūja* to him, and glorified that political agitator as greater than Jesus Christ. Possibly his hotel associations in Brussels led him to forget what Christianity he had been forced to learn at school. Still more curiously his opinion of Gandhi's saintliness was shared by other prominent labourers in the Christian vineyard. To use a colloquialism—Now what do you know about that?

Then Tremearne had a family to be proud of and to mourn.

The London *Times* of September 25, 1928, contained the following announcements:—

TREMEARNE.—In proud and loving memory of my husband, Arthur John Newman Tremearne, Major, 8th Seaforth Highlanders, M.A., Christ's College, Cambridge, LL.M., Dip. Anth. M.Sc., Barrister-at-law, Gray's Inn, who was killed in action while leading his men in the charge at Loos, September 25, 1915.

"Till Death us join."

TREMEARNE.—In proud and loving memory of William Crew Tremearne, 2nd Lieutenant and Battalion Machine Gun Officer, 8th Seaforth Highlanders, B.A., Christ's College, Cambridge, son of the late Shirley Tremearne, Tudor House, Blackneath Park, S.E., severely wounded in the

charge at Loos and missing after Hill 70, September 25, 1915. "

"They were lovely and pleasant in their lives."  
**TREMEARNE.**—In proud and loving memory of Richard Hastings Tremearne, ('Dick') 2nd Lieutenant, 5th Battalion, The Royal Warwickshire Regiment, son of the late Shirley and Elizabeth Tremearne, Tudor House, Blackneath Park, S.E., died on active service April 14, 1902, in South Africa.

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the Faith."

"Where in wondrous light are shown  
 All Thy dealing with Thine own,  
 Who shall know as they are known,  
 Bring us, Holy Jesus."

Shirley Tremearne's son Harry served in the Imperial Yeomanry through the South African War and again through the Great War—1914-1918, and, as a Major, Royal Artillery, was awarded the Military Cross. Few civilian families in Bengal can equal so fine a record of service and sacrifice.

A son-in-law was killed at the battle of Loos.

In 1927 the Great Eastern Hotel Company bought the site originally occupied by Dykes & Co., the celebrated carriage builders (founded in 1770) and put up a modern building which, during the present war has been a great boon to thousands who came to a city where accommodation was hard to find. It is undoubtedly the best hotel in Calcutta, and, after the War, when the old building is modernised, ought to be the best in India.

## *BARMAIDS.\**

The opening of the Suez Canal in November 1869 (small ships passed through as early as March 1867) made the journey to India comparatively easy and the fashion started of bringing girls out to serve behind hotel bars. In the leading British hotels they were engaged on agreements for six months, some remained but comparatively few stayed beyond their time. One or two found a husband on board who took them off at Colombo or Madras and they failed to report at Calcutta. Others, perhaps more fortunate, married in Calcutta. Taking them in the aggregate they were level-headed, as moral as women not surrounded by temptation and often quick at repartee. One bright damsel attracted notice by putting in his place a fellow who thought he could shine with—"So you're the maid, are you?" and was told, "I am, but I've had my chances." Another girl at the Adelphi, feeling herself insulted, put one hand on the bar and vaulted over with ease, smacking the Lothario's face. In her early years she had been in a circus. But many of the "Mashers" who came for wool went away shorn. The girls were something of social lionesses in their own circle, ruling over a little kingdom of their own.

Less important taverns engaged local girls but they considered life behind the bar

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(\*This formed the subject of a paper read by me at a Calcutta Historical Society's tiffin in 1941.)

degrading; few stood up to it, generally taking a short cut to the dogs; they may have been half way there before starting, but all barmaids were outside the pale of Society, forced to keep within the surroundings of their work. In India, more than anywhere, men and women can only climb the ladder they are on.

The attitude of men towards women (and, towards barmaids in particular) is like that of a woman at a bargain counter—both hope to get something for next to nothing. Therefore, when the news went round that a new barmaid had arrived, (and the hotel people did not take pains, that is very great pains to keep that secret) every man about town called to have a 'look-see'; there was nothing else to do any how and even if he was not particularly struck, it gave him something to talk about next day.

Before putting on her best frock to make her *debut* in the bar, the management knowing the eternal feminine is always looking out for the infernal bounder, put the girl through the local "Who's Who and What's What" (if she didn't know that before,) when details about the "Johnnies" who would be sure to pay their addresses—those ardent admirers with the best of manners and the worst of intentions—least likely to benefit anyone but themselves; generous fellows—generous to a fault, their own faults in particular. If a little learning is a dangerous thing, very few of us are out of danger, but a little local knowledge can be useful in teaching us whom to meet, greet, and avoid. It has

been said that a woman has one cell less in the head and one more in the heart than a man; that is mostly when she is taken unawares, so a few words of warning about safety in numbers with some emphasis on commission to draw were generally taken to heart.

Behind the bar her duties went no farther than pouring out the whisky. A khitmagar always stood alongside to put in the ice and push in the glass stopper of the soda water bottles quite a dangerous job then owing to the numbers that burst. He was there too as a protector in case of danger which was always present late at night.

The good opinion she had formed of herself on the voyage was by no means diminished by finding all the men round the bar in evening dress. That interested more than the discovery that there were no chimney pots on the houses, or the absence of loving couples in the streets with their arms round one another's necks. The change from surroundings where there were more girls than men taught her the possibilities of friendship at first sight, love in ten minutes followed by a proposal after four pegs—happenings hardly worth writing home about. Most men take a wife as they buy a hat; they try on a few, then, losing patience decide that "this one is near enough" and expect to be happy ever after. As for the men who lived Robinson Crusoe lives upcountry, and like other Englishmen have no real home and leave no memory, and, if they have a family are little more than a fairy story to their children, it is hardly to be wondered at



that they were carried away by buxom amiability in a low-necked bodice—all brevity, beauty and perspicuity, which often displayed more than it hid. Poor fellows! they sighed enough to turn a windmill while offering heart and overdraft before she even let them know her pretty Christian name. Some of the Constant Lovers “Heart-consumed and anguish-pierced” could make such an impression on the girl’s heart that would take a full fortnight to eradicate. Well, the girls behind the bars were the only decent women they had a chance to talk to and their extravagances have long been forgotten.

A pretty Jewess told me that she had seven serious proposals on her first night behind the Adelphi Hotel bar, and seven presents the next day which she sold forthwith to one of the local jewellers.

In those days posts were created as a provision for such gentlemen failures as worthless sons-in-law, helpless cousins, and troublesome nephews, when the daring and the dissipated were cast off to India to “whistle down the wind to prey on fortune.” Novelists of those times enthused over hard bargains who had disappeared under a cloud but returned years later, sun-burned and with a fortune, eager to marry the girl they had betrayed (omitting all references to the girls who had betrayed them.) Calcutta, during the cold season, offered a warm welcome which would have been warmer had they paid their bills. Very few of them are seen today. With barmaids they have gone out fashion. So

have "Fallen Daughters", "Gloomy Sundays", "Wasp Waists", "Small Feet" and those "Black Sheep" who wasted years while choosing under which flag they were to complete their journey to Hades. Australia probably suffered more from crooks and twisters who absconded from the East than from those old-timers consigned to Botany Bay. A police officer who went to Sydney to bring back an absconding solicitor found five Calcutta men under detention for serious offences.

Vagabonds of good family were sent out to indigo concerns or to tea gardens owing to their relatives believing with more hope than wisdom, that India was a land free from temptation even to those who carried that about with them. Hope is a good breakfast but a bad supper.

One of these star turns used to drive round a tea garden in a four-in-hand; his relatives paid as long as he kept out of his native land and stayed where he might have a native landing him.

When they came to Calcutta their principal occupation seemed to be looking for trouble and they always appeared in public in a complete outfit of social exaltation. One, who said he was an only son (his father must have suppressed his feelings) had a curiously unpleasant, constipated laugh full of asthmapherics—a shandy between pushing a stopper into a soda water bottle, and a cock afflicted with whooping cough. While mashing the barmaid, he let out a burst of his startling noise. A rival, standing alongside asked. "What, another egg, Fitz?"

"Are you aware that I have a handle to my name?" asked the only (prodigal) son.

"So have other things that are kept under the bed," was not exactly one of those soft answers which turneth away a hard truth.

Girls behind the bar were as great an attraction to idle men as they were to the girls. One, a member of an old noble Irish family became engaged to a Spence's Hotel barmaid that is, he couldn't very well get out of it after a week-end courtship. She probably resembled the American woman who thought it would be cute to be the wife of one of those famous families that had brought up Ireland from a pup, and they spent the honeymoon at Chandernagore. Then creditors began to think and to combine, forcing the happy pair to worry, not about how to be happy though married, but how to carry on. The problem must have been insoluble for they disappeared. A year or so later, Australian horse importers reported meeting his lordship in Sydney where he and his better half were serving behind a bar, bright and cheerful though without the handle to his name.

One of the five girls at the Hotel d'Europe, later, the Bristol, was a daughter of a celebrated or notorious (whichever way your politics led you to believe) Labour Member of Parliament. She was well built, good-looking, and straight as a gun barrel. When men said what they thought of her father and his politics, tears came into her eyes and she would declare. "But you don't know what a good man he is, and what a kind father!" She was one who came to India "just

to see what it is like," that is, from the spirit of adventure. The men she met did not appear to attract so she went home and married there.

Practically all the girls came from lower middle-class homes; many of them had been employed by Spiers & Pond, then the leading restaurateurs of the day; they were as well behaved and ladylike as the average of other English women in Calcutta. Probably they could talk better. The man who said "I like women who talk better than the other sort" was asked "What other sort?" Talking can be carried on without brains but there is a gulf between talking and conversation. The girls were the confidantes of many of their acquaintances, which helped them to acquire wisdom. Looking back, one chuckles over what they would have thought and said about the bloody-looking talons on women to-day, one of the most barbarous and repulsive ideas ever forced upon womankind. One can imagine how they would sum up modern Society ladies, devotees of the cult—Penny Plain, Tuppence Colored—doing their facial running repairs in public; they would have had no hesitation in writing them down as shameless hussies.

Women have always been accused of being conscientious in the art of misrepresentation although a lot of it may be a sort of hedging. An old writer thought so from this—

"Together lye her Prayer-Book and Paint,  
At once to improve the Sinner and Saint."

The fashions of yesterday may become the improprieties of to-day but lapses back into

barbarism are hardly expected. Many of us learn too late that—

“Little grains of powder,  
Little dabs of paint,  
Make a woman’s wrinkles  
Look as if they aint.”

A clever girl behind the bar was a great asset to the business. One, working for Evershed in Rangoon was offered better terms in another hotel and Evershed found that with one or two exceptions, all his patrons had silently stolen away.

In the mid 'Eighties, a subaltern, after a courtship of three days, married a girl in a Calcutta hotel. The honeymoon was spent in Taff Williams' hotel at Raniganj—(the “place to spend a happy day” as the advertisements ran). To say that her education had been neglected would be the exact truth, for another week at an elementary school would have been noticeable in her conversation. She was a good girl and had nothing to do with any admirer who didn't mind wearing his coat out at the elbows through leaning, love-sick on the bar, unless she could say—  
“‘E be-aves 'isself.”

When the fog of infatuation dispersed, the young soldier sent her home to his parents who tried the effect of a few terms at school. Some of the veneer of deportment came easily enough, but she had ‘made her bazar’ and her brain was atrophied. Nothing could get her out of saying “sunthin”—a word that led to many breezes. Twenty years later, when she had a daughter the same size as herself she could be depended upon

## :OLD-TIME TAVERNS IN INDIA

to greet old friends with "sunthin" that annoy or interested her.

The average barmaid who married a local man was as good a wife and mother as other women. If there were failures they did not come to light. One turned out temperamental which the wearer of the matrimonial hair shirt and crown of thorns said was 97% temper and 3% mental. He took to spending most of his time in the place where he found his wife, which led to hard times. She, poor soul, thought she could talk to a Pathan moneylender in the language of the domestic circle and was struck with an iron-shod *lathi* which killed her on the spot. The Pathan got away.

Much as those who married barmaids in India may have tried, they could never live down the past. India is the worst place in the world for that; people know too much about one another. Woman forgives, man forgets, but the world remembers.

In 1885 among three women brought out for one of the hotels, one captured the proprietor. The wedding was quiet, one outsider being present. Six months later she confessed that she had fallen so deeply in love that an invalid husband and family in England had completely faded from memory. The second husband knew he had a prize and they were married again, the only outsider being myself. The second marriage was quite all right as her first husband had obligingly died. It does not often fall to the lot of a man to be best man at a double wedding—twice to the same couple inside a

year, and for that I fancy I hold the world's record.

Goldie Morrison, a big, blonde Scot with that unconscious charm which infected all he met, came out in 1880 to a Calcutta bank which went into liquidation. Another bank offered him a good billet and he was getting on well when he fell in love with and married a pretty barmaid, a girl of good family and education, in Spence's Hotel. The marriage was a most happy one but in a land swarming with the deathless army of snobs, a barmaid could not be tolerated and Morrison found himself looking for work again.

For a couple of years they fell on lean times, but she was all devotion and they were supremely happy. The matrimonial knot, like other knots, holds all the better when there is a little strain on it. Then fortune smiled again. Owing to the death of the principal in B. Smythe & Co., one of the largest wine and spirit merchants in Calcutta the firm went into liquidation. Morrison was appointed liquidator. Out of the ruins of that business he picked up the agency for one of the most reputable brewing concerns in Great Britain. With his exceptionally fine physique and pleasant manner he secured orders from regiments whose consumption of beer ran nearly into a barrel a month per man.

The extent of the business he brought in astounded the firm at Home, and Morrison thought he was made for life. Experienced commercial travellers who came East say it is unwise to send home too many orders to one particular firm as it leads to some family depend-

ant being engaged to take over the agency and the sacrifice of the man who found the customers. The fact is, it doesn't pay, in this world, to be too good. A French cynic advised moderation in both virtues and vices—but don't miss too much. Someone may want to shoot you.

While Goldie Morrison was congratulating himself on his success, the brewers, unaware of the great charm and ability of their representative, decided to send out one of their own men feeling sure he would do far better than a stranger, and Morrison was told to go. Poor fellow! He learnt that the ladder of success is full of splinters which hurt most when you are sliding down.

After that, whatever he put his hand to, turned out a failure. He came down to living in a poor part of Entally where he unfortunately picked up confluent smallpox. While in a critical state someone told Mrs. Morrison that Goldie had gone blind. As a matter of fact he had lost the sight of one eye the other was not affected, but the news was such a shock that she gave premature birth to an infant, and died. While he was slowly recovering he constantly complained "I can't make it out. The Memsahib doesn't write to me," but the news had to be told. A Scots padre tried to break it to him as gently as possible, but it was too much for the poor fellow to bear. He refused all food, and quietly, but persistently, went to join her.

The Scottish community raised a large sum for the three children at school in Scotland, and did so much for them that for once in my life



I regretted not being a Scot. The infant that had come into a world of sorrow a month before due date, was taken home by a wealthy couple retiring from business and brought up as their own, possibly never told of the great love that comforted his parents during a life of devotion and misfortune, but spared a life under that harsh taskmaster—poverty. Verily, as the Persian philosopher said, when Fate descends, all caution is in vain.

Mrs. Brockway, wife of the Union Chapel padre, and mother, (I have been told) of Mr. Fenner Brockway, M. P., started an agitation in 1901 against the employment of women behind hotel bars in India. Like those who constantly deplore the decay in religion, she forgot that the same proportion of women are born into the world who wish to be wives, mothers, actresses, nurses, teachers, or who have hearts like hotels, able to accommodate anybody. Were that not so the world wouldn't go round.

She was probably stimulated by the activities of a Society in England which was out for notoriety on the same stunt, making much out of the supposed risk, or harm done to girls behind the bar—their long hours and loss of liberty as it was then the practice to preserve the good name of hotels and pubs by locking the girls up every night. A sensational item in their propaganda was that 10,000 British barmaids are confined every night. The falling birthrate hardly substantiated that, but to women disappointed and soured by having no children, that stirred them to activity.

Physical deterioration was Mrs. Brockway's strongest argument. Most of us, men and women, go off a bit during our first two years in India but that generally wears off. Few living things bear transplanting without a bit of wilting. Mrs. Brockway was not a whole-hogger; she was willing to compromise to the extent of permitting women to serve behind hotel bars provided they had passed the age of two score years and ten. That was the argument which led me to sign the petition for the abolition of barmaids.

Mrs. Magri of the Hotel d'Europe, who not only employed five barmaids but had an "Austrian String Band" of about eight Danubian Jewesses, and had led a life of wide, very wide, experiences in which she had never missed anything, jeered at this. "Too old at fifty! when women were holding on to life with their false teeth was nonsense. Of all ages that was the most dangerous for then every half chance was taken in real earnest." Well, there's something in that, as the girl said when she pulled on her stocking.

As usual, reforms breed reformers. An elderly, pious busybody, wife of a legal luminary with several hefty sons, started an agitation for the dispersal of the Danubian Jewesses who plied their ancient trade in Kerr's Lane, (now Collin Lane.) They were right off the main street and interfered with nobody, but the old lady, more busy than pious although she had nothing at all to do, having a lot of the law at her back, was, for a time, successful in her campaign. It gave many others a chance to blackmail. The unfortunate women were sharked by

their fellowcountrymen who revel in all business which does not suffer from the drawback of fixed prices, taking brokerage from the women, *bacsheesh* from the landlord, and forced jewellery on the girls on the instalment system at Jewish prices, as part payment for an Israelitish good turn.

Everything has its opposite number and the pious old moral sanitary inspector found the houses next door and also opposite to her own occupied by members of the unfair sex whose numerous male friends kept hours of extra-ordinary irregularity. Then letters came from abandoned females complaining about her sons' failure to meet pecuniary obligations, and demanding to know what she intended to do about it.

Still worse, the reformer had a *barouche* painted a "puce" colour, one of those shades which so soon offend the eye, and to her profound annoyance, some of the more prosperous ladies whom she tried to turn out of business developed the same taste in art, and the Strand had many puce-coloured vehicles, occupied by younger, better looking women with better dresses and jewellery than her's. She must also have felt that it was no use getting up early if you wake up late.

Mrs. Brockway did not find retribution fill the houses next door. Government acted promptly. Hotel keepers were compensated and the barmaids went home. Whether Calcutta has been any better since is easily answered; the disappearance of barmaids has certainly given local girls a better chance. But reformers,

whether in morals or in temperance are mostly animated by cant and hatred. As an old-time sufferer put it:

“Help, Lord, for good and godly men

• Malitius are as Devills,

You, our good Angell, only can

Seale up these pious evils.”

Full of the spirit of compromise, Mrs. Brockway carried her campaign right through. To give her credit, no complaints were made about misrepresentation or unfair treatment. With the exception of the Wellington Hotel, a cheap place where three barmaids were employed, their departure resulting in putting the place out of business, it is doubtful if anyone lost very much.

Outside of better opportunities for finding husbands, (and that means quite a lot), girls lost little by leaving India. They did not live in the breeziest rooms in any hotel. Locked in every night often meant enduring more of their share of the rigours of the climate, for one can enjoy some ventilation if the door is left open. In 1888, the hottest year in my recollection, four Calcutta barmaids died of heatstroke. Poor Gipsy Rock of the Esplanade Hotel, who, although past thirty was one of the prettiest and most amiable women in India, being among them. At least a dozen sailing ship captains would have stood on their hands right round Cape Horn to win her, but she refused them all.

One of the reformers was Warne, a holy howler of Hallelujahs, known in the back streets as the Weeping Prophet of Dhurumtola, who

was Jeremiah and distilled lamentations in one, a star turn at forcing the fear of hell fire upon those who had no mind of their own but physiologically were more constipated than pious.

Like most others in the dissenting line of piety he affected the humble get-up of a short black alpaca jacket in preference to the longer clerical garment worn by official preachers on bigger pay. Nothing but black ever polluted his appearance; his unshaved face was permanently as mournful as a black tombstone, giving one the impression that he'd swallowed a horse and left the tail hanging out.

Professional piety had narrowed his mind and strict teetotalism kept him from the company of those who knew something of the world. But he managed to dodge work while keeping himself aloof from practical affairs, and lived free from pecuniary anxiety by promising those who gave to his church (that is, to him) something good in a world to come hundreds of millions of years hence, about which he knew less than he did about this one.

In the pulpit, and when on active service with the collection box his lamentations filled lanes and gullies. A walking funeral, his soul filled with grief (tempered with hatred) to see anyone cheerful in this sad world. With supreme faith in other men's damnation he seldom failed to let them have it with:—

“Almighty vengeance sternly waits to roll  
Rivers of sulphur on your guilty soul:  
Let hell receive him, riveted in chains  
Damned to the hottest focus of the flames.”

Over barmaids who enjoyed more happiness every week in the year than he did in a generation, he lifted up his voice and wept. Some female members of his congregation boasted that they had used two handkerchiefs during one of his heartbreaking appeals.

He evidently copied a popular preacher in England who shed tears in the pulpit hoping to find his congregation shedding shillings.

"What's that fellow blubbering about?" asked a stranger of a working man.

"Well, you'd blubber too if you were perched up there and had as little to say for yourself as he has."

Warne was the life and soul of funerals, making as much as he could of the terrors of death and of the frequent use of the word "eternity." And at the doleful feast at the house of the dear departed he was all there with his halo of moonshine.

"With sobs and sighs he wiped his streaming eyes, But always took the plums of largest size."

It paid, and that, among preachers means much. Having wept his way to financial success his Society thought he might do even better in God's Own Country so, promoted to a Bishopric in some obscure branch of Christianity, he eventually sobbed his passage into a world better than he had tried to make this one. Some one said he had been seen in a damp cloud in Heaven practising the 119th Psalm.

Well, the altar cloth of one generation becomes the door-mat of the next.

Hotel keepers were occasionally victimised

when London agents engaged an attractive girl, saw her safely on board at the docks with a five pound note in her purse and wished her bon voyage.

Before the ship moved out a worm-eaten frump, old enough to be great-grandmother to Mary who had a little lamb, with the appearance, as the Irish police sergeant put it, of having knocked at the back door, took her place. Those were the days when Britons enjoyed the privilege of travelling all over the world without a passport, so the change-over was easy. Having enjoyed the first real holiday in her life, grandma would be quite brazen on arrival while the hotel people, knowing how much truth there is in not lost but gone to law, kept quiet, smiled a smile that had about as much cordiality in it as skimmed synthetic milk, and sent the old fraud back to her native land by the next steamer.

One of these women who may have been a shade under forty-five was kept on for a few months by William Cook of the Adelphi. You'd be looking long at a chicken before you thought of her. One night she complained to a man standing at the bar that some fellow had called her a "hay widow".

"What's a hay widow?" she asked. "I dunno. You're the first I've met."

Hotels were not the only sufferers from personation. In the early Nineties a Calcutta man introduced himself to an amiable girl who, if she wasn't very good was very goodlooking. She had been a barmaid, or said she had, and didn't mind where she went so long as she went some-

where, so the two set about solving the problem about getting her to Calcutta without too much scandal. An advertisement for a milliner for a Calcutta firm attracted attention. A milliner was found who was willing to go part of the way and in due course the London people engaged her. She got on board and the other girl took her place. On arrival she did not favor the firm with a call. She had arrived and that was all they cared about.

Lodgings were found in a superior boarding house and as there was some mystery about her everybody set about finding it out. The landlady had attained that age which made her look upon any young and pretty girl about the house as worse than a crime. It is hard on women when they learn that youth is the only beauty. Strictly speaking, the landlady hadn't a lot to brag about but when nobody cares whether a woman is moral or not, she is generally the more censorious for it. Comparisons between youth and age lose the game for the old, so the pretty and intriguing lodger was told to get out quick! Nobody likes a scene where, at best, you have to suffer humiliation, so the room was vacated, and lodgings found in Dacres Lane where people were supposed not to bother about trifles. Even then the landlady of the first place egged on two of her lodgers who enjoyed special favours to give the man a hammering.

Late one night they waylaid the unsuspecting lover and gave him an unmerciful thrashing. To his credit it must be stated that he tried to put up a good scrap, but one of his opponents was a Sapper subaltern, middle weight champion



of the army, and the other an active official in a Government department so he hadn't chance. A signet ring badly cut his forehead, marking him for life. A police court case resulted in the soldier getting four months rigorous imprisonment, and the other man six weeks.

Perhaps it was as well that, by that influence which in India can dam rivers and blast rocks, they kept their jobs.

The man who brought the girl out was also put on the carpet. His firm gave him the choice between marriage or losing his job. That seems to be a piece of unconscionable tyranny based on mentality formed by reading love stories, but he chose the course said to be laid down in Heaven and they appeared to live without difficulty. Years later, when the children grew up, and both parents were over fifty, she went off with another man. Well, if you cannot teach old dogs new tricks, it isn't too easy to break them of old ones, but even her husband's best friends knew it served him right.

Some of the barmaids caused the reformers anxiety by refusing to leave when passages were provided. Unconsciously, they led to stopping further reforms and brought prosperity to doubtful hostleries in the suburbs. The police were not so particular in Kidderpore as they had to be in Chowringhee as:

"In Country Clare  
It's little for blushing they care  
Down there."

So the more-or-less fair ladies who started with a note of interrogation in their reputations.

and who considered they were wasting their time when not engaged in amorous activities, found themselves unmolested in the purlieus of the docks.

For a year or so, with mercantile mariners and swagger legionaires of the damned playing the lyre to fallen angels, Kidderpore taverns working on the shady side of the Garden of Eden, flourished like the green bay horse. Strays and strayed, with not enough reputation to dust a finger nail contrived to exist without honour, taking all the drinks that came along, only occasionally leaving an ardent, chance acquaintance to consult mamma about the next day's family prayers, made themselves agreeable to all who looked like having any money. With nothing to lose they lost that. Khitmagars without recommendations served drinks calculated to corrode the inside to the likeness of a sieve.

Boarders were given meals consisting of chickens of wide experience, pensionable ducks, boiled (buffalo) beef with roast gravy, bullet-proof mutton chops, rat-trap brand cheese, Christian milk that had been well baptized, over-ripe bananas, and other delicacies which made men during the night feel like captive balloons.

Swarming with rats and bugs, there were equal chances of picking up ptomaine poisoning, peritonitis, and other complaints from fish, foul, to fever, and, were Kidderpore destroyed, they could furnish dirt enough to start another one with.

As usual, those running the haunts, with consciences eating their heads off for want of

exercise, were ignorant of catering beyond knowing that food could be bought in the bazar and whisky was kept in bottles. Cooking and cleanliness were of less interest to them than crossword puzzles are to crocodiles. But they did know that pretty girls, or girls that were not pretty but were pretty wide awake were an attraction to those who live well, have plenty of fresh air, go down to the sea in ships and avoid marriage being unable to endure the thought of a weeping widow on the beach watching their sailor husband's body being washed ashore. 'Twas ever thus. A bluejacket during the present war said. "When I'm at sea I'm a submarine chaser. When I'm on leave ashore I ain't quite so particular."

Like Clovis, one of Saki's characters, speaking of the difference between right and wrong said "There is a difference, you know, but I've forgotten what it is." "The knowledge of evil is not wisdom," at best pleasure is the true end of life, and men idling in a hot climate generally took more pains to be damned than to be saved. If evil communications were not always the best policy, that was their look out! the Great Way is easy but all love the by-paths.

"For rarely do we find in one combined,

A vigorous body and a virtuous mind."

George Washington, a truthful American, is credited with—"Pons Testiculorum! No man is married a hundred miles from home." The poet Campbell said much the same—

"Oh! 'tis sweet to think that where're we rove  
We are sure to find something blissful and dear;

And that when we are far from the lips we love,  
We make love to the lips that are near."

Salt water mercifully solves many ties and troubles. Despite what the cynic said there are no generous men—there are women who know how to make a lonely captain, 6000 miles from his wife, almost prodigal in his generosity. Kidderpore barmaids in spite of the fact that going about with sailors is no way to keep a girl ship-shape, were not averse from a bit of sightseeing in ships on time charter on the coast when, on questionable terms of affection they did their best to prevent at least one mariner from feeling lonely. Before the ship got back to the Sandheads, the touring barmaid began to look as ugly as a Christian while the Captain burnished up misgivings and boredom; then came the inevitable change from sleeping partner to sparring partner. The girl was more or less welcomed back to the tavern where, to make her friends and confederates green with envy, the loot would be displayed (and depreciated). The master mariner, now relegated to a "monster of the deep," more lonely than ever, realising too well that every peach has a heart of stone, with the resignation of a true believer derived as much consolation as he could by remembering

"The light that lies in woman's eyes,  
And lies, and lies, and lies."

A thousand years ago a Chinese philosopher warned men that they should take no notice of what they hear on the pillow. And no one ever heard of a man breaking his leg over a whole orange. It is the piece of skin thrown away

by some careless hand which puts him on his back.

A girl in one of the suburban taverns, obviously an Indian Christian, tall, thin, cold and crafty, under twenty-five, made her way to notoriety over much salt water, and even after cracking her fingers to keep off evil spirits, never met a man without making him worse. For a time she was a bit of a fallen star in that unpretentious neighbourhood. Were it not that the laws of physiology are stronger than contempt she would not have gone very far, but women who could talk and banter in English were rare about the docks, so she had it all her own way.

A chief officer who put the noses of two captains out of joint learnt that the course of true love ran through hostile territory. It was found one morning that he had been sent to meet the Great Pilot; the sticky details of his death ended nowhere. He was dead—that was all there was about it. A suicide or two attracted more attention. Robberies made even amorous sailors cautious, and one Kidderpore hotel at least achieved the impossible—it lost its character.

Nobody in the business appeared to have made any money which seems to show that while there is no reduction in the wages of sin, the overheads leave vice in much the same position as virtue, which, we are told, has to be its own reward. To change a few words in an old Gaiety song:—

“Gone away are the Kidderpore girls,  
With their powdered faces and tricked up curls;  
Gone away are those sirens dark,

Fertile of kisses, but barren of heart—  
Bowling alternately cold and hot—  
Stedfastly sticking to all they got—  
Filling a bevy of sailor boys  
With maddenning hopes of synthetic joys."

Whatever may be said about the social defects of today, it must be admitted that the craze of worshipping at the shrine of Saint Vitus (the whirled, the flesh, and the devil) is preferable to crawling from one hotel bar to another to pay homage to Bacchus with Venus serving the drinks; ogling barmaids when they were the only respectable women one had to talk to was, at best, a pastime more teasing than invigorating.

With greater freedom women who wish to do as they like, no longer find themselves banned and barred from everything by their more circumspect sisters. There are far too many liberty snatchers who, if they form a community of errors are numerous enough to take no notice of what others may think. Morality has become a matter of individual thought and the world does not seem to be much the worse either. But it is doubtful even were barmaids permitted in Calcutta hotels, they would be much of a draw. The local girls no longer live in purdah, enjoy all the liberty they want, perhaps more than their grandmothers would consider good for them, and English "girls" of 35 wouldn't stand a chance against them. The paraphernalia of social life, like other things, wears out. And when all is said and done, barmaids were able to support themselves without throwing a man out of a job, which is more than can be said about a lot of women.

## THE ADELPHI

In 1868, there were three hotels in Waterloo Street; The Bengal, at No. 11, the Adelphi, at No. 12, and the Calcutta, at No. 14. Woods had a place of call at No. 6 Dacres Lane, and the Bentinck Street kept the others company. No wonder they were like man that is born of a woman and had such a short time to live.

The Adelphi was taken over by Broad and Mackinnell in 1877, both sailors and popular with ship captains. It is said that fame has no present, popularity, no future; but popularity makes the lives of tavern keepers even shorter than that. The building still stands at the north-east corner of Crooked Lane; a fine house in its time, the first floor well set back from the street with lofty rooms. Its present shabbiness gives no indication of the position it occupied in Calcutta social life sixty years ago.

Ship captains made the Adelphi their headquarters. With them the accepted custom was for the Captain and the Mate to be always drunk at sea, recognising the right of the second mate to be drunk in port. Some captains made a practice of abstaining from liquor from the time they shook off the pilot at a Home port until the anchor was dropped at destination.

A story used to be told of a captain writing in the logbook three days after leaving Liverpool—"The mate was drunk today." The mate thought that a bit hard with a four months' voy-

age in prospect, so he waited three weeks when he wrote "The captain was sober today." Once formalities were through, captains set about making up for lost time finding, to all accounts, Broad and McKinnell ready and willing to keep them company. So far as business was concerned, that paid, but there were drawbacks.

In 1882, Broad, David Nunez Cardoza, ("Dave Carson, C.S.I.") (Comic Star of India) still remembered by old Koi Hais, and James Ottewill of Harold & Co., (he was 86 and in 1942 still alive and kicking) took a health trip to Japan. A cyclone in the Bay of Bengal washed overboard 500 sheep and nearly sent the ship to the bottom. This did not interfere with Broad's and Dave Carson's alcoholidday programme. The fact that alcohol can give you a red nose, a white liver, a yellow streak, a dark brown breath and a blue outlook didn't concern them. Sufficient for the day was the enjoyment thereof. So convinced were they that whisky was good for them they were good for nothing else. They were in agreement with Baron De Marchienne who enjoyed everything Scotch, lock, stock, and barrel,—with the accent on the barrel. Well supported with cases of Daniel Crawford at Rs. 24 the dozen, they entered a spirited protest against the errors and evils of teetotalism.

Festivities continued right up to the China Sea where they had the misfortune to meet a typhoon. Broad began to see half a dozen blue monkeys and more red rabbits all wearing green straw hats, jumping off his bed. When a man is in that condition he is apt to draw faulty con-



clusions and Broad began to run amok. With great difficulty he was overpowered, put into a straight jacket and, for safety sake lashed to the bridge. Shrieks and struggles brought on a fit in which he died. With the ship in grave danger a funeral service was out of the question so, without ceremony, at midnight, his body was committed to the deep and his last graveyard watch spent in Davy Jones' Locker. Dave Carson, warned in time, put in the peg or he might have gone the same way. He lived another fourteen years, mostly on the poverty line, but as he used to sing about Babu Ramjam Thunda Ghose, B.A. (failed).

"Here today and gone tomorrow  
In this vale of tear and sorrow;  
Never lend but always borrow,  
Kuchpurwani Mari Jan!"

(Culled from his Matric Exam)"

And Kuchpurwani in those days did much to reconcile men in India to the discomforts of life.

Three years later, McKinnell, a perfect martyr to the complaint which carried off his partner, quaffed his last peg, slipped his cable and crossed the bar (but not professionally) leaving the hotel derelict.

William Cook, then assistant manager, G. E. Hotel, young, round-faced, blond and well built took over Broad and McKinnells, opened it as the Adelphi, and prospered.

The 1880's heard the swan-song of sail; dozens of ships were tied up in port, often for eighteen months at a time, waiting for cargo. Their captains, with little to do, spent most of

their time "mashing" in the hotel while Cook offered additional attractions in the shape of a bar, excellent food, two billiard tables, and a good skittle alley which gave chances for exercise.

The Adelphi became the captains' headquarters. They filled the bar and dining room, spending the money they were able to wangle from the underpaid, half-starved sailors, but were as touchy as they were autocratic. I have seen Cook take with a smile, a straight punch on the nose from a half-drunk captain; offending one might have resulted in a boycott, so he gave valour a second place. That was particularly brave of him as he was good with his hands and could have taken satisfaction—but it didn't pay.

One morning I went with Cook on board a homeward bound steamer at the jetties. A Calcutta exquisite had bilked the hotel out of a few hundred rupees and thought, as he was on board ship, he might jeer at Cook for his inability to get anything. Cook gave him such a hammering that he dropped insensible on the deck. I often wondered how much of that man's swank was watered down by the introductory happening of that homeward voyage.

For two or three years I put up at the Adelphi on my return from upcountry and remember, regretfully, the gusto with which I used to put away a pound or more of corned and spiced beef for which Calcutta has long been famous, all for a modest eighty rupees a month.

I have been three times round the world, travelled in luxury liners, stayed in some of the

best hotels, but never once came across beef-brisket, corned or spiced hump equal to that obtainable in Calcutta. Luckily there is no cold store so meat is not kept for years to be run over by rats. Men who came to the city over a century ago have written in praise of Calcutta beef-steaks.

In 1885, Cook brought out three young women, one of whom never went behind the bar as she was appointed book-keeper. Capable, unassuming, with a penchant for writing verse and a keen sense of humour she soon captivated her employer who appreciated her fine qualities. I was the only one invited to the wedding. The marriage turned out well. With two of one mind they prospered.

Quite unaccountably Cook suddenly fell into bad health. His case was like that reported by the country practitioner. "In the end the patient died of nothing very serious." The hotel was left to his widow who brought out her son by a former marriage, a clever youngster, and for a time they managed the business with considerable success.

At that time Lieutenant Travers Edward Madden—"Teddy Madden" to his intimates, was a bit of a star turn at Spence's hotel. Those were the days when the reputation of the British subaltern stood high. Kipling spread himself over the exaltation of his intelligence, and Teddy Madden was an excellent specimen. Clever, humorous, a good amateur actor, able to talk well on most subjects, free from the insignificance of exaggeration, he was particularly attractive

to a small crowd of genial intellectuals who, when not actively engaged at Spence's Hotel bar were more or less unemployed. In those days physical fitness was not a leading feature of British-Indian social life, and Teddy, always well dressed, carried himself with perfect ease, was conspicuous without effort, even amongst those who resemble musical glasses—to produce their best tone they must be kept wet.

Born in Agra, the city where the famous Willcocks brothers first saw the light, he went to Sandhurst and was commissioned into the South Wales Borderers, then laying at Aden—afterwards moving to Allahabad. His opinion of that sultry ash-heap, Aden, was that he wondered why the man who first discovered it didn't go away and say nothing about it. Transferring to the Indian Army he started with the 16th Bengal Infantry at Alipore where Colonel Stoddart found him rather too much of a handful. To keep Teddy on the rails he was made range officer which meant being on the Dum Dum rifle range soon after 6 a.m. As he generally reached his quarters in time to slip into uniform and drive the six miles in a ticca gharri, the margin for sleep was cut pretty fine, but nothing curbed his energy. Stoddart decided to get rid of him and the 17th Bengal Infantry ("Loyal Purbeahs", although that was not what the army called them,) just arrived in Fort William, took him. With that regiment he soldiered most of his twenty years.

Four years in Calcutta unfitted him for service in upcountry stations where the main busi-

ness of life is killing time and there is too much time to kill. When the 17th moved from Calcutta to Benares, that holy Hindu city described by an American tourist as a "paradise of pilgrims and prostitutes, lice and licentiousness, bulls, beggars, and bugs," the dullness of cantonment life hit far too hard. Calcutta with its bars and barmaids, men of fortune and no fortune, Australian horse importers, bookmakers, actors, ship captains, commercial travellers, idlers, twisters and other cheerful rascals whose only object in life was to get the best side of the unwary, and to warm both hands at the fire of life, were all glad to welcome a cheery subaltern who could talk like the best of them, laughed in the right place, and who became more and more polished in his language the nearer he sunk to his Plimsoll mark. The prospect of a morning at Spence's attracted him like iron filings to a magnet. Every bit of casual leave that could be wangled or scrounged was spent amongst the crowd there with whom he had a warmer welcome than what a plump missionary might expect in a famine-stricken cannibal village.

His popularity resulted in a London decoration—the "F. O. S." (Friend of Sloper) awarded by *Ally Sloper's Weekly*, one of the leading comic papers of the day to prominent men who had endured enough religion in youth to last through life and were assumed to be uninfluenced or unimpaired by sloppy or bilious affection for missionaries. Looking back it is astonishing how popular and important Ally Sloper was for so many years.

In September, 1939, Mr. R. J. Barber wrote to a London Sunday paper about *Ally Sloper's* award of a silver medal. "I well remember a gunner in my coast defence company, named Hall, being awarded this decoration for saving three lives at a Clerkenwell fire while on furlough. The year was 1897. 'I cannot say if the authorities ever gave explicit permission for the medal to be worn in uniform, but I do know that he always wore the ribbon and the medal too on church ceremonial parades without ever being checked."

Madden, with his "F. O. S." became more than a local character; no other man in Calcutta had it and as he was in due course depicted in one of the weekly cartoons, *Ally Sloper* added to cheerfulness in the hotel bar.

There was nothing vulgar about Teddy Madden. He valued the art of conversation too highly for that and his choice of expression was scholarly without being pedantic. It is strange that he should have been so fond of company which led him to assert that any hotel was a good hotel if it had a bar even if it had no other public room.

When Billie Cook died in 1891 he left his widow comfortably well off: she was also comfortably middle-aged with leanings towards better society than that found in the Adelphi. Teddy Madden began to frequent the place taking interest in the landlady's difficulties. His Cupid's dart may have been aimed at the bar but he found Mrs. Cook well read and above average intelligence. Marriage is easy to a widow; if she

was not all sheep's eyes he was all ram's horns. An opportunity for social advancement may have been the attraction to her; possibly both wondered if marriage might turn out to be one of those alliances which cripple both sides. Hoping for the best, they chanced it. In 1894 Madden became a sleeping partner in the Adelphi which meant, to his better half, looking after a husband who needed that, and a lot more.

Marriage is not a failure even if some praise it as they would good mustard—with tears in their eyes. If the man gives and the woman forgives it has a good chance for success. Doubts were expressed about the reception the Maddens would have from the Loyal Purbeahs but for once Indian snobbery took a back seat, leading Mrs. Madden to prefer the amenities of life in Agra Fort to that of Waterloo Street. The result was a neglected business and shortage of money.

William Smith, who had been for twenty-one years officers' mess sergeant of the 51st Light Infantry managed the Adelphi with Mrs. Shard. Both were honest and dependable but lacking in energy, so bills accumulated while trade fell.

Kellner & Co. eventually seized the hotel but were forced to give it back by Mrs. Madden who fought the case herself in the Calcutta High Court. A counter-attack went the other way and in 1898 Kellners sold the place lock, stock and barrel, but the barrels were empty. The Maddens came down to living on the pay of a Captain plus small additions from free-lance journalism, possibly, (certainly in India) the worst remunerated work in the world.

Madden volunteered for service in Somaliland where he did good work as transport officer showing capacity for organisation for which he was praised. On return to regimental duty he published a small book on transport.

Some time later he came in for £800 a year. Leaving his wife in India, he went home, organised the finest horse show and military tournament ever seen in Dublin and in five years spent every penny. Nobody could understand how he managed to get back into the Indian Army but he did, and stayed there in spite of scores of bitter letters sent by his wife to Army officials right up to the Secretary of State for War.

As is usual with those addicted to hospitality, Madden gradually became too much for those who did not mind an extra peg but were not inclined to make a week of it. Then it was known that he could never get past the rank of major, and popularity waned.

Scenes with his wife did not help matters. While he often referred to Billy Cook, his predecessor on the nuptial couch as "the gentleman whose loss we have so much reason to deplore" he never spoke of her without respect, having genuine admiration for her capacity.

When on leave from Manipur he promoted a boxing tournament which was held in the Corinthian Theatre. Soldiers came from places as far distant as Quetta and Maymyo. Madden roped me in to help as there were 75 entries and we were doing quite well when the Brigade practically ousted him, doing what was possible to crab the whole show. Madden came up smiling,



persuaded his amiable friend the Maharajah Prodyot Kumar Tagore Bahadur to entertain competitors to dinner and rather got the best side of Brigade.

My loss over the tournament was only Rs. 790 so I was pretty lucky to get off so lightly.

Mrs. Madden more or less maintained herself, being editor for some time of the "Empress", an illustrated paper similar to the "Sphere". (That deserves a story all to itself.) When a woman starts going downhill the road is greased for her.

At a big Durbar where one of the great Indian Princes offended Royalty by appearing in a plain white silk chapkan. Laura Madden wrote up the story illustrating it with a portrait of one of the most loyal and dignified of the Indian rulers. It was a mistake but offended dignity demanded that notice should be taken of so serious a blunder, and she had to look for other work.

Mrs. Madden once taught me something. A lady guest of the Adelphi practised fortune telling with great success. On no account would she see anyone without previous arrangement. In the meantime she made inquiries about them. Those names unknown to Mrs. Madden were brought to me with the result that if she was off the line in regard to the future she often had amazing accuracy with the past. There was nothing of the chance work of crystal gazers, geomancers, or astrologers about her; she found out first, a sound, practical method which placed her far above the ordinary soothsayer.

One of her clients had been dismissed the

Burma Police for flogging a woman (who probably deserved it.) He was keen to know something about himself. She told him, wrapped up so vaguely that he left Calcutta for good.

Sticky details about other callers impressed, but upset them. Fortune-telling should not be too accurate, particularly about the past; most of us would find, did we stick a hand into our conscience, that it came out as black as ink and that mind-reader found her welcome growing far too cold, even for Calcutta. But her stories of how details made men and women grow pale were quite interesting.

When Madden had put in full time as major he was retired on pension eventually taking the post of Comptroller of the Household in Alwar State. There were not many—that is, very many—anxious to serve that Maharajah, but the pay was good, there was plenty of shikar and little interference. One of the conditions laid down was that Madden should give up drink. Unfortunately, in India, nothing keeps well, not even good resolutions. In a place like Alwar any man could be pardoned for taking a rest from his memory, and sobriety, like virtue, is not everything.

Madden was honest and capable with high intelligence, with a mind free from petty vindictiveness which is more than can be said about many teetotallers.

During the summer of 1916 he went out after tiger. Alwar State in June is hot enough to melt the sword in the scabbard; as someone, surprised to find anybody lived there put it, the air was so

dry that fish came out of the water to sneeze. Only those who have spent days in the open when the merciless sun shines down like a magnesium lamp and almost fries the eyes, know what it feels like. When Madden came in he did what others have done—drank with the moderation of a thirsty camel. Heat stroke supervened. He was brought insensible to Delhi, put in hospital and in spite of care, after three days breathed his last.

Mrs. Davies, an Englishwoman, employed as matron of the Alwar hospital went with Madden to Delhi. After his death it was suggested, apparently by her, that she should take the body back to Alwar. Two of Madden's friends, F. T. Griffin-Chave, and H. M. Rodden had the coffin taken to the station and booked. Mrs. Davies saw that put into the brake and then took her seat in the train. Just before the start, Griffin-Chave and Rodden, decided that as there was no Christian padre in the State, it was fairly certain, in the absence of the Maharajah the body would be thrown to hyenas and the coffin used for firewood. On a sudden impulse, while the train was on the move, both men pulled the coffin out of the brakevan. The nurse must have been much surprised to find, on arrival, that it had disappeared.

Rodden's men dug a grave in the churchyard; a British battalion—the Bedfordshire Territorials stationed at Delhi Fort furnished a firing party and poor Madden was given a soldier's funeral.

Mrs. Madden being entitled to the pension

of a Major's widow had to fill in papers and produce a certificate of death. She came out from Home, and obtained in Alwar his scanty belongings, which the State officials, who knew much about Mrs. Davies, had locked up. Among them was Madden's diary. Naturally enough she looked to see when the last entry was made and how many days before his death. Madden was a methodical diarist adding to his income by journalism, and it happened that he had sent, under registered cover, contributions to two papers. The post office receipts for both were pasted in his diary.

Comparing the dates Mrs. Madden nearly rubbed her eyes out when she discovered that the stamped receipts showed her husband to have been alive two days after the death certificate proved him to be dead.

It is easy to make a diary entry in the wrong place, but the post office stamp indisputably corroborated Madden's own writing. Much puzzled, Mrs. Madden went to Delhi to make inquiries.

All the officials received her kindly. Great interest was taken in the extraordinary difference between the two dates, everybody thought that could be easily cleared up, promised to see that was done, and then—silence. Puzzled and disappointed, feeling certain there was something sinister about this unexpressed hostility, Mrs. Madden made up her mind to solve the mystery.

It is incredible that Mrs. Madden was not told the facts of her husband's illness, and the exact date of his death but it is possible that she refused to believe the true story. Then so many

people, finding secrecy in the air, either through a belief in golden silence or through fear, stopped saying anything thereby adding to suspicion. This led to the wildest accusations against the Maharajah who often in the habit of getting rid of money with the prodigality of a drunken sailor, declined to reimburse Rodden for the cost of Madden's funeral. He also declined to give Mrs. Madden anything, but it is undisputed that he knew no more about the cause of Madden's death than the widow herself.

Then Mrs. Madden found out various incidents in the career of Mrs. Davies which led her to assume that Madden met his death by foul means. She had his body exhumed. The result of that examination convinced her that he had been poisoned.

A significant feature of this development was that the medical officer who signed the death certificate, as soon as he knew that an application for exhumation had been made, went on leave and retired, but as in the Punjab it is officially stated that 75% of death certificates are wrongly diagnosed anything might happen.

For real trouble, take two women and one man; Mrs. Davies learnt all about that. She was hunted, the gravest of charges were laid, and there was not much left of her character by the time she was through.

The Davies moved from Mogok to Rangoon where he worked for Lim Chin Tsong in his oil refinery. Apparently he was a clever man, meek and mild and neither of them spoke about the Madden case. Then postcards began to arrive

at the office depicting Mrs. Davies in the nude and addressed to "THE MURDERESS."

Seemingly Mrs. Madden had found a negative of Mrs. Davies amongst Madden's kit, and with diabolic humour, tormented that woman by sending these postcards openly through the post. Apparently, too, Mrs. Davies was nothing to look at, dark, and little more than a crate of bones, but, when in Ulwar, as the only woman there, she was all that could be desired.

Those expensive virtues, sympathy, generosity and forgiveness have brought more trouble and misery upon mankind than deliberate efforts to do injury, but when a woman sets out to harm another she disregards all three. The *Indian Daily News* of September 9, 1920, and other papers carried the mystery of Major Madden's death further along a twisted path:—

"An unusual case came up yesterday (September 7th) before the Bench of the Chief Court of Lower Burma composed of Justice Maung Bin (Officiating Chief Justice) and Justice Rigg in which Laura Madden, widow of the late Major T. E. Madden, I.A., late Controller of Palaces, Alwar State, sought to revise the order of the District Magistrate, Rangoon, who declined to take cognizance of her complaint against Mrs. S. A. Davies, nurse, and her husband, H. J. Davies, chemist, the former of whom the complainant accused of murder by poison of her husband at Alwar and robbery, the latter of receiving stolen property. The case had dragged over three and a half years and petitioner's case was that Major Madden was the Resident in Alwar

State, took leave and went to Delhi where he died in hospital from poison administered by Mrs. Davies, the first accused. The inquest was held in Delhi and death was found to be due to natural causes. The petitioner applied for exhumation of Major Madden's body which was refused. She was greatly dissatisfied with the finding of the inquest and had sought to establish her charge against Mrs. Davies. After having had recourse to the C. I. D., India and Burma, and having failed to bring the accused to trial she moved the District Magistrate, Rangoon, who held the charges could not be inquired into without a certificate from the Political Agent, Alwar. The necessary sanction for investigation was obtained from the Political Agent, Alwar State, in a demi-official letter dated January 19th, 1917, and the letter was produced.

"Enquiries were first begun in Rangoon by the C.I.D. in June, 1917, in obedience to the District Magistrate's requirements for a proper certificate from Alwar State at the time of the alleged offence. She immediately telegraphed to Colonel Bannerman, now the Resident at Kashmir and filed replies from him by wire and a letter declining to issue a certificate on receipt of the Political Agent's letter, dated the 17th August, 1920, she appealed by letter to the Lieutenant Governor of Burma for a special direction to the Court to dispense with the certificate and proceed on the Political Agent's demi-official letter of January 1917 in view of the grave nature of the charges and the evidence on the record of the crime of murder produced in the enquiry

ordered by His Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Burma in October 1919.

"Not receiving any reply, she again wrote to his Honour's Private Secretary on the 27th August. He replied the Section did not apply, as that was contrary to the terms of the Magistrate's order. She prayed the Court to revise the order of the District Magistrate returning the application and to direct him to proceed with the hearing of the complaint.

"Mrs. Madden gave details of the illness of her husband and his treatment in hospital. The death certificate was, she said, based on the story of the female accused as to Major Madden having gone out tiger-shooting the day after his return from the hills and getting a severe sunstroke as a result, and drinking heavily on the top of it a story disproved by his diary of State works and literary work all written in a beautiful clear steady hand-writing the day after the alleged heavy sunstroke.

"She alluded to the strenuous efforts she had made for nearly four years to uproot these falsehoods chiefly to vindicate her dead husband's good name. She read extracts from newspapers to show how distressing this wicked slander on the dead had been to her.

"This was only a little of the works performed by Major Madden irrespective of his military duties during 23 years of faithful service.

"Replying to the Bench Mrs. Madden said her contention was that any British subject committing a crime in a native State can escape into British territory and save himself from arrest and



punishment. The second accused, husband of the first accused was she said, in league with his wife and she (Mrs. Madden) charged him with receiving stolen property.

"Major Madden died in hospital in Delhi. Alwar was four and a half hours away by railway and none of the stolen property was actually recovered in Burma, but she had recovered four pictures belonging to her husband in Maymyo.

"Mr. Justice Rigg in passing orders said that when Major Madden was residing in Alwar State he took leave and came to Delhi where he died in hospital. The applicant's case was that his death was due to poison administered by Mrs. Davies. An inquest was held in Delhi about that death, but it was found that it was due to natural causes. The applicant was greatly dissatisfied with the finding at the inquest, and for a number of years had been seeking to establish her charge against Mrs. Davies, and had recourse of the C.I.D. in India and Burma but had failed to bring the accused to trial.

"Their Honours were not concerned with the merits of the case, it was solely a question of the Rangoon Court's right to take cognizance of the crimes complained of. The District Magistrate had held that the charges could not be enquired into without a certificate from the Political Agent at Alwar.

"It was alleged that some of the alleged stolen property has been found in Maymyo. Possibly a charge of retaining stolen property might be cognizable by the Maymyo Court but this was not within the jurisdiction of the Chief Court of

Lower Burma. For these reasons their Honours thought the District Magistrate's decision correct and dismissed the application.

"That was by no means the last of it. She was found sitting on the steps of the Viceroy's House in Simla demanding retribution and threatening *hari kam*. Lord Reading granted her an interview and expressed great sympathy, telling her, so Mrs. Madden said, that her husband had undoubtedly been poisoned but no Court would convict on the scanty evidence advanced. Most generously he gave her £200.

"Before then she had threatened to throw herself under the wheels of the Prince of Wales's car when he was in India, and had to be detained until His Royal Highness left Delhi."

The next scene was staged in England.

On June 1, 1926, a case against Earl Winterton was reported in most of the papers of the British Empire under various headings:—"SCANDAL FROM INDIA", "SUIT AGAINST EARL", "LADY ALLEGES WAS POISONED", "SENSATIONAL DRAMA OF MOATED CITY", "MAHARAJAH INCENSED", "WIDOW'S FIGHT FOR HUSBAND'S GOOD NAME," and so on.

"Mrs. Laura Elizabeth Madden conducted her own case against Earl Winterton, Under-Secretary of State for India. The subject of her complaint was a letter from Earl Winterton to Colonel Wedgwood, M. P., to whom Mrs. Madden had appealed to represent her case in Parliament. It was stated that the Earl had written to Colonel Wedgwood referring to the inquest on the Major

when a verdict of "Death from natural causes" was returned."

The following passage in that letter seems to have given grounds for the suit.

"The facts seem to be that Mrs. Madden's mind had become slightly unhinged as the result of brooding over the death of her husband..... I understand that it was all carefully gone into in India at the time, and that the political authorities who investigated it satisfied themselves that there was no ground for interference.

"Mrs. Madden was convinced that the death of Madden was the result of "one of the most cold-blooded murders in the history of crime."

"His Lordship—"A trial took place before a recognised tribunal in Allahabad in 1912 and there was an acquittal."

"Plaintiff complained it was the trial of a woman for a previous murder. She alleged this woman was the person responsible for the death of her husband, who had all the symptoms of arsenic poisoning."

"It appears that some hard-headed 'Koi Hai' expressed the opinion that poor Madden's death was due to "twenty years hard drinking and an hour in the sun." Mrs. Madden asserted that her husband had been "assassinated by poison;" all his effects were confiscated by the Alwar State, and she was plunged from affluence into poverty on a semi-starvation pension.

"To this the Attorney-General stated that Major Madden died insolvent."

Mrs. Madden denied this and read out to the Court—"My every hour is tortured by the agonis-

ing knowledge that a valuable life was wantonly, cruelly taken but the cruelty was added to by the strenuous efforts to give the poor victim a non-Christian burial in the God-forsaken State of Alwar. The appalling tragedy was sufficient to drive any wife insane."

Colonel Arthur D'Arcy Gordon Bannerman who was Political Agent to the Eastern Rajputana States at the time Madden was appointed on the staff of the Maharajah in 1914 said he had made inquiries about him and he reported that Major Madden had to retire from military service owing to an unfortunate propensity for drink.

He was on leave at the time of the Major's death, but on his return he was informed that Madden had been drinking rather heavily before he went to Delhi. "They gave him particulars regarding the major's estate in Alwar. Subsequently he had considerable correspondence with Mrs. Madden about her husband's death and his estate, and did his best to help her. She was very dissatisfied on learning there were practically no assets of her husband, and she made wild charges against Alwar officials alleging they had swindled her. It appeared that she had been staying at Alwar and had so annoyed everybody by her charges that she was told to leave the State. In March 1917 she visited the witness at Bharatpur and among other charges, she alleged that a lady who had been staying with Major Madden had stolen furs, &c., belonging to her. Then also for the first time so far as witness was aware she said she suspected this lady of having murdered her husband. He pointed out that her suspicion

seemed to be quite unfounded, in view of the death certificate. After further correspondence with the plaintiff, said witness, he personally saw the Maharajah of Alwar and got him to appoint a small committee to investigate Mrs. Madden's claim respecting her husband's estate, and that committee made a report and, witness believed, recommended that a sum between 1000 and 2000 rupees should be given to Mrs. Madden..... But apparently Mrs. Madden had so incensed the Maharajah by her accusations that, witness believed, he did not give the money recommended."

The "Daily Telegraph," London, of June 23, 1926 concluded their report of the proceedings with—"The foreman announced that the jury were still of opinion that Mrs. Madden had not made out her case."

"Mrs. Madden having exercised her right of addressing the jury the foreman, replying to his lordship, said their view of the case was unchanged."

"His lordship then said it was better that the jury should give their opinion, but had it been necessary he would have ruled that the occasion on which Lord Winterton's letter was written was a privileged one, and there was no evidence to go to the jury. In the circumstances there would be judgment for the defendants, with costs."

"Sir Roland Burrows;—"Colonel Wedgwood desires me to say....."

"His Lordship: "Colonel Wedgwood has no right here. He is no party to the proceedings.

To divulge the contents of a private letter meant nothing to Colonel Wedgwood. Anything to get into the limelight ; it seems rather a pity that he hasn't been equally keen to get into a lime kiln. As might have been expected he did no good to Mrs. Madden who, defeated but undaunted made another effort and read part of a document to Mr. Justice Horridge who said—"I won't listen to you. I tell you to be quiet or I will have you removed from court."

After further exchanges in which she threatened to place a copy of a document before His Majesty the King she threw down her papers on the solicitor's table and left the court.

Even all that was not the last of it.

Under newspaper head lines of "APOLOGY OVER STRAYED LETTER" Colonel Josiah Wedgwood, M.P., a clumsy political storm trooper obtained a choice bit of publicity. He had some in 1921 when he boasted about his liberality to his Indian "bearer" to whom he gave sixty rupees a month. Actually the Colonel engaged the man as a guide, and paid no more than the standard wage. It is easy for newcomers to make mistakes in local manners and customs but a wise man would avoid bragging, particularly as it subsequently transpired that the bearer was not even a guide; he was one of the most efficient detectives in the Criminal Investigation Department. Apparently, however, Colonel Wedgwood, after his experiences in India looked upon himself as one of those authorities the world finds who publish books such as "Five Days in Siam in Nine Volumes," and jumped at the idea of throwing

limelight on 'Indian corruption. Having jumped off too soon he had to banquet off humble pie.

"Referring to the action brought by Mrs. Madden, Colonel Wedgwood, in the House of Commons, apologised to Lord Winterton for inadvertently sending a private letter from him to Mrs. Madden in returning a package of her papers."

After that Earl Winterton would be in agreement with the man who wrote:—

"Now isn't it true, that a wise enemy,  
Is better by far than an ignorant friend?  
For when a man passes, his time among asses.  
He'll certainly get a hard kick in the end."

But all politicians know that you cannot get on in politics without chumming in with skunks.

Mrs. Madden was entitled to sympathy. Out of season with life, proud of her husband's position, puzzled by the curious happenings of his death and by the promises of help all of which came to nothing she naturally believed there was something more than mysterious about his death. Quiet advice might have gone far to clear her mind of suspicion except for discrepancy in dates. Even now does anyone know the exact date of Madden's death?

Had she kept clear of the Potteries M.P. she might have fared better. He was as clumsy as a donkey dancing among ducklings, and unfortunately unable to learn from experience. In 1941 he made a hash of a Mission to the United

States where he needlessly insulted a Congress Member—Mr. Burt Wheeler—and even when proved wrong, he said he was sorry he had said what he did about Senator Wheeler. "But" he added "I take none of it back."

And perhaps Lord Wedgwood might be sorry he spoke when reminded that, in January 1921, Henry Newman, "Kim" of the *Statesman* related that Wedgwood in Peshawar addressed a Meeting where he said—"I fought against the Turk in Gallipoli and found him to be the finest gentleman in the world. I think it is a pity that all Europeans do not turn Mahommedans."

Most of the Indian papers abstained from publishing that choice bit of Christian piety, but some were not so regardful of the M.P.'s reputation for it appeared again on January 24, 1921. From all that (and such a lot more) Josiah Wedgwood looks as if the entire absence of brains would not have further handicapped him. Since then, obviously to push him into a hole where he can do little harm he was made a "Peer of the Realm." How true it is that

Great honours fall

To creatures small.

. It might be said that poor Madden was one of the many casualties of peace. His virile mind was strangled by routine and boredom and relief was found in good company. Unfortunately good company is often bad company and when that is not available the bottle offered forgetfulness if not subsequent consolation. A clever man with alert mind and wide interests he was almost thrown away in dull upcountry canton-



ments while the loneliness of life in an Indian State must have been hard to bear.

One feels too that Mrs. Madden's mind was practically unhinged or she would never have made the mistake of bringing a suit against Earl Winterton. The Chinese, say that mistakes occur through haste, never through seeing a thing leisurely, but the years she spent prosecuting her mistakes traverse the truth of that.

The *Calcutta Englishman* of July 10, 1922 contained an obituary notice which detailed many of Major Madden's activities. Some of his literary work was well received; he had an educated journalistic mind and might have done better in a temperate climate. Men are like trees—they don't all thrive in the same country.

**MADDEN**—In saddest memory of my dearly loved husband Major Travers E. Madden I. A., whose sacred remains were rescued from a train during conveyance for a non-Christian burial in an inaccessible Native State, and interred at Delhi with full military honours by the Bedford Regiment 11th July 1916. Born 19th August 1870. 17th Infantry 1894—1913. Adjutant 1894—1901, 1900—13, Military correspondent ("Field Officer") "*Englishman*" and "*Empress*". Literary Correspondent "*Englishman*", "*Empress*", "*Empire*" and "*Society*" 1909—16. Publications:—"Types of the Indian Army Illustrated" 1913; "Organisation and Administration." "Organisation of Franco-German Armies 1870 at a Glance". "Practical Training of British and Indian Troops in India," "Fortification and Topography," "Organisation and Equip-

ment" "Guide to the Staff College," "Staff Corps Officers' Guide" "Tactics in War," "Geographical Studies in Wars of the Nations," Thacker's "Newspaper Readers' Companion," and "Illustrated Maps of the War in Europe," August 1914. "The Oasis in the Desert," 1916 (unpublished novel) Inaugurator and Editor of "The Philatelist, 1895—1900; awarded silver and bronze medals Philatelic Society, London 1898-9. Founder of Lodge "Light on the Surma" Silchar 1898; Designer and Builder of the Masonic Temple. Benares, 1899. Originator of Scotch bagpipes into the Indian Army 1898. Awarded medal for smartest Transport Camp, Delhi Durbar 1902 and presented by Lord Kitchener with silver-framed (Boer War) panel photograph of himself for general good work. Somaliland Medal 1904. Organizer, Honorary Secretary and General Manager, Munster, Connaught Exhibition, Limerick, May-November 1906. (Gold Medal reward) First Home Leave in fifteen years. Honorary Secretary Executive Staff and Organizer and Director of Entertainments and Military Tournaments Irish Exhibition, Dublin 1907; Winner, first prize, Horticultural Show, Dublin, for Garden Produce. Honorary Secretary, Agra, Silchar and Rawal Pindi Races, 1894—1902. Comptroller of Palaces, Alwar State, October 1814 July 1916, closing his life's work of many activities and ever-ready service to others by lectures at the Boys' High School and Girls' High School, Panchgani, B. P., on Carlyle's "French Revolution," 16th June and Dickens "Murder-Mystery of Edwin Drood", 28th June 1916.

"Round his grave are quietude and beauty,  
And the sweet heaven above,  
The fitting symbols of a life of duty  
Transfigured into love!"      *Whittier:*

Inserted *ex oequo et bono*.

Calcutta *Englishman*, July 10th 1922."

And all this originated in a small Calcutta  
hotel.

## MORE CALCUTTA TAVERNS

Lord Lytton, a Viceroy with Oriental taste for grandeur to whom British-Indians are indebted for the cult of the *kala jugga*, was more than a sportsman—that is, he forbade any official, civil or military, gallant or ungallant, to make scandal public. To some extent that prevails to-day. He brought out, as Viceregal chef, M. Bonsard, a Frenchman, to superintend the kitchen. The staff of 100 cooks was more than Bonsard could handle, his fiery temper causing endless trouble so, after a few months' service he resigned. The ability to manage men is a greater gift than painting or music.

The New Club in Simla being in liquidation, Bonsard took the premises as an hotel, but Simla was too many for him, so Federico Peliti came in. For a time Bonsard filled various engagements before settling in Calcutta where, at the end of 1883 he opened the Hotel de France at No. 27, Dhurruhtola changing the name later to Hotel de Paris. Even then the neighbourhood was slummy, but superb cooking attracted the best people in the city.

Bonsard's dining room was surrounded by bedrooms; if a guest happened to go too far it was easy to give him a shakedown.

I dined there once and on that occasion, one of the upper classes, whose eyes had acquired a statesman-like absence of expression, appeared to have remembered that he had forgotten some-

thing. With nothing on but a headache he walked round the dining table half worried to death, oblivious of the fact that anyone was there.

Feeling that his good name would suffer, Bonsard, wringing his hands, followed his guest imploring him to remember that ladies were present. Screams, curses, and laughter followed the poor fellow into his bedroom, and as human nature loves being shocked, that was the last of it.

Spooner Hart who weighed 22 stone had his livery stables and 2,500 horses almost opposite Bonsard's and frequently entertained lady friends when the members of his family were out of the way. On one occasion Bonsard saved Hart from some unpleasantness. Full of gratitude, Hart sent him a pig which the hotel cooks soon turned into pork. The two men had a good helping at tiffin, to see how it tasted but a day or so later, Hart's veterinary surgeon asked, "What's become of that pig I was treating for swine fever?" which led to a bit of serious thinking. Sucking pig did not appear on the menus of the Hotel de Paris for quite a time after that. So far as was known, nobody suffered, most old residents of Calcutta being immune to ordinary diseases.

After Bonsard's death the hotel fell into incompetent hands and closed for good.

Among my recollections of men in the catering trade I cherish most the memory of Boscolo, a "special large No. 1 sized" Italian from Mauritius, a Sahib who knew his business from A to Z. On his arrival in Calcutta, he took a look-see

job as chef to the Great Eastern Hotel but soon started on his own account opening the Bellevue Hotel at 149, Dhurumtolla where he made enough to take over the Continental Hotel in 1894.

During his management of the Continental he was justly proud of the excellence of the food and the cleanliness of his kitchens, which soon made the place a popular resort where some of the best public dinners were served. Never afraid to speak his mind he made money, eventually settling in Shillong with his family of very good-looking daughters. He died in 1926.

After his retirement the hotel eventually got into the hands of Mr. Mackertich John, the present proprietor who has probably made more money out of the Continental than Boscolo ever hoped to possess.

The Esplanade Hotel at the corner of Bentinck Street and Esplanade East founded by Sen Bros. dates from 1874. Two years later it was in the hands of J. W. Ware; the directory for 1880 gives R. Monk as the proprietor. He was a Continental, uncommunicative, with a foreign accent. In addition to the Esplanade he had the contract for catering on the Eastern Bengal State Railway.

• Before the Hardinge Bridge was put across the Ganges, passengers to and from Darjeeling boarded a ferry steamer at Sara Ghat or Damuk-dia where they took dinner or chota hazri. The meal was always good, plenty of time being allowed for eating it. Monk also owned the Clarendon Hotel at Kurseong.

The Clarendon subsequently passed into the hands of the Pell family going through occasional stormy times.

Monk had two pretty, blonde daughters. When they married he retired, handing the business over to Arthur and Mrs. Welldon. Both had started at Spences, and she served behind the bar at the Esplanade.

They considered their establishment far superior and more select than Hard's. As some cynic put it at the time;—

"The dingy-fronted Esplanade Hotel  
Thought every other pub a loafer's hell."

But instead of a fine, florid upstanding manager like Harry Jones (later of the Darjeeling Livery Stables) they had Bowman, a lamp-black Nigger of Niggers, formerly a tenor singer in the Haverly Minstrels, a troupe with many real colored members.

No vestige of the Esplanade Hotel remains. The Improvement Trust made a road over the site where men came down the stairs to swim the Esplanade Tank in dress clothes, a "borrow-pit" of ancient days made to fill in the low-lying ground on the Maidan.

Skittles was a favourite game in Calcutta during the 'Eighties. The Adelphi Hotel had the best skittle alley which was patronised by sailing ship captains; American skippers preferred others in Bentinck Street. While British and American captains generally kept apart, a mixed crowd could be found at Hard's Hotel, 39, Bentinck Street, where they could play, shout and curse at the top of their voices.

In those days everybody shouted; it was a sign of efficiency; voices were stronger than they are now. The American captains talked to the willing Indian markers as though abusing a slacker on the royal yards during a sudden squall.

It is curious that the descendants of passengers in the *Mayflower*, sour-faced, psalm-singing, woolly-whiskered kill-joys, developed so lurid a vocabulary, and how they assumed that all who worked for them were natives or free-man of the Isle of Dogs.

Yet, one reads that when Dr. Johnson and Adam Smith had their first and only meeting at Glasgow, the Great Cham of Literature answered an argument of Smith's with the brief phrase "You lie," and, in his turn was answered "You are a son of a bitch" which looks if they were growing almost rude to one another. It is soothing to know that, with the exception of language, the dispute was bloodless. The Americans probably inherited some of that way of starting a friendly talk.

Jim Hard had been Officers' Mess Sergeant of the 65th Foot, a remunerative post which enabled him to own and run race-horses, leave the service, and open his hotel in time to reap the imaginary harvest promised by the promoters of 1883 Calcutta International Exhibition. Hotel life did not appeal to him. He was up every morning at four ready to drive down to "Squire" Milton's stables in Dharamtala where he helped mostly with the veterinary work, joining Milton as a partner in 1886.



Mrs. Hard, assisted by Harry Jones, also an ex-sergeant of the 65th, ran the hotel. At night, when men tried of skittles, they could sit at small tables and drink their pegs; whisky was good and cheap then, and nobody was ashamed to take their whack of it. There were, of course, partial abstainers content with a bottle a day, but there were no teetotal drinks like half pegs; full pegs, ten or twelve to the bottle, were the vogue.

For entertainment Mrs. Hard, a squat, Roman-nosed, red-faced, metallic woman, born and bred in the army and married at fourteen, played and sang. With a 44-inch bust and 24-inch waist, low-necked bodice which showed quite a lot, (for women then were not anxious to look as if a steam-roller has passed over them during the night) she kept a heavy foot bulging with bunions encased in elastic-side boots sizes too small for her feet, each toe an acher of corn, well pressed down on the 'loud' pedal of a harsh-toned square piano, while she played the wrong notes with much feeling.

Those were the days when it was respectable to show the world that God did not send you into the world to be happy. A person who did not pretend to be habitually mournful was considered a doubtful 'Christian.' England revelled in songs which were doleful and morbid. The right song for sailors seldom failed to sink the ship in the third verse while most preachers did their best to frighten sinners with the word "Eternity."

A story is told of Mr. Bernard Shaw who was given by a woman member of one of his

South African audiences what she thought would be a real poser. "Where do you hope to spend Eternity?"

"I'm in it now!" rather disappointed her.

Mrs. Hard's vocal efforts did not include anything with a difficult accompaniment. In tones as sympathetic as a cornet she favoured "Won't you buy my pretty Flowers," "Silver Threads among the Gold," informative ballads like "Down by the River Side I Strayed," or cheered her audience with "Baby's Left the Cradle, for the Golden Shore, O'er the silvery water she has flown," obliging, after a vociferous encore with, "Close the Shutters, Willie's Dead, (Him we loved so well.)"

Hard's Hotel never aspired to the dignity of a "Captain's House," although Master Mariners were often there. Bucko mates, bosuns, as truculent as skippers but not quite so arrogant, sergeants from the Fort, beery local men and wandering hard cases gathered there to sing with that sublime confidence in where they intended to spend what was left of their share of Eternity—"Wait for me at Heaven's Gate, Sweet Belle Mahone." (Some wait!)

It is doubtful if she charmed anyone with her singing. Her songs were old enough to be familiar, bringing back to memory other days and better climes, for old songs are always as fresh as the first time you heard them particularly if you happen to be in love. They differ from old friends who, too often, remind one of change, age, and trouble.

There was nothing of the blue bag nor any-

thing near the knuckle about Hard's Hotel. Customers understood that Mrs. Hard was the proprietress who tried to encourage them to frequent the place by playing and singing, at which—well—she did her best. They came there for a rest and a drink, to join in choruses they liked even when they could not remember the tune right to the end.

Part of the unwritten programme was that a vocalist must whet his Swanee whistle, so she took her share on medical grounds, also for the good of the house. With a note of solid admiration men talked of those eighteen cherry brandies which loaded her down to her Plimsoll mark. With that properly stowed she would close the piano and wish her admirers a dignified good night. Then, as gingerly as a festive trooper passing a suspicious provost sergeant, she found her way to bed.

Some soldiers' wives become as 'regimental as their husbands, frightening their offspring with—"Now I'll have to report that to the sergeant-major when he comes home," but Mrs. Hard seldom referred to army life. Occasionally, if an old friend turned up she might, in regretful if admiring contempt, refer to the "bloomin' old Sixty Fift!" But on matters of military discipline women, like Chinamen, are convinced that it is nothing but a silly device to annoy people.

Jim Hard died before he was fifty. His widow gave up the hotel in 1887 and started a boarding house in Darjeeling. As the boy put it—"a widow's a woman wot marries the lodger," she married Harry Jones, who was also fond of

horses and, for many years was the popular proprietor of the Darjeeling Livery Stables.

After fifty years in India he took his first trip Home and died a week after he landed. Honest and straight even the horse trade could not affect his character which shows that honesty, loyalty and integrity are like blue eyes, born in man.

When long past seventy Mrs. Jones went to the United States to join her daughter and years later was reported to be a healthy octogenarian, fit as a fiddle. Years of cherry brandies obviously did her no harm ; she took them to make the place pay, and it is doubtful if any rabid teetotaler ever had the pluck to warn her against the evils of drink.

Almost opposite the Adelphi in Waterloo Street was the Waterloo where, in the Nineties Herr and Frau Most, two dirty-nosed Jews laboured at their age-long occupation of milking the Golden Calf while saving all they could in their dhobi bills.

The attraction of the Waterloo was an Austrian string band. A dozen Danubian Jewesses who, with rare exceptions might have done as well with a garden hose as on stringed instruments, gave occasional selections. Between the items they sat at visitors' tables, listless and uncompanionable, unable to read or write but able to say enough words in English to order the drinks on which they drew a commission. They may have asked questions, but were not interested. Jews brag a lot about their intelligence but it is doubtful if their average is higher than other

people; their women are often quite surprisingly dull and ignorant.

There never seemed to be any scandal about these bandswomen. Rumour had it that a considerable sum was deposited with the Austrian Government before the girls were allowed to leave and their return to their native land, unharmed by their occupation, had to be guaranteed. There seems to be a change in the weather so far as Jews are concerned in Austria to-day.

Downstairs was a bar for sailors where they could argue without interference and fight it out in the street. Fights were unfashionable upstairs although when some Freemasons ran a Christy Minstrel Show at the Masonic Hall, 55, Bentinck Street, the malice of stringed music gave way to other hostilities.

In accordance with the ethics of the day the organisers were too modest to advertise their own names, but, anxious to preserve their social status, each performer was described on the programme as "A Gentleman Amateur." I was one.

After the performance which was almost as poor as the attendance, the Gentlemen Amateurs in full darkey regalia of big bows, huge collars, buttons as big as saucers and Koh-i-Nur diamond studs, with vermillion lips stretching from ear to ear across streaky black faces invaded the band-room and bar of the Waterloo Hotel.

We formed up outside and marched in to a rousing opening chorus accompanied by tambourines, banjos and bones. Some of the loafers from downstairs brought up the rear.

One of the Gentlemen Amateurs ,put his arm round a band girl's neck and rubbed his blackened face against her fair cheek turning her into a savage for she shrieked and scratched like a tigress. The hotel durwans, trained to tackle, evidently thought the deposit with the Austrian Government was already forfeited. They started a scrap; the toughs butted in and by the time some of the Gentlemen Amateurs reached the street, their own dogs would have thought twice before licking them.

The head of the Church of England bears, among other titles, that of "The Metropolitan."

A young parson coming to Calcutta was asked by a fellow passenger where he intended staying and was told, "With the Metropolitan."

"You don't mean to tell me you're going to stay at the Metropolitan? My God! you'll be done for life if you go anywhere near that low-down Bentinck Street pub!"

In Lall Bazaar (Flag Street) Radha Bazaar, Bentinck Street and Dhurumtolla were low haunts where Firebrand Whisky, calculated to stiffen a tinker was retailed; the fact that it tasted of hot brass nails and green chillies, and corroded the inside to the likeness of a sieve only added to its popularity. Sailors, firemen, soldiers, loafers and vagabonds of sorts used to foregather in those places and split the mainbrace or one another's heads until the police thought it safe enough to take a hand when there were no scruples about battering them into unconsciousness.

About fifty years ago an Italian war ship

came to Calcutta intending to spend a Merry Christmas. At that time one or two British war-ships were also in the Hooghly. One bright and sunny Sunday morning, both nationals in their best clean clothes fraternised in Radha' Bazaar drink shops.

Never since in the history of Calcutta has there been such a sight. Scores of unfortunate Italians could be seen scooting down to their ship while British sailors were running alongside them punching their heads. The road from Lall Bazaar to the Eden Gardens was strewn with the bodies of senseless Italians, and after that no Italian man-of-war has been seen in Calcutta. It was said that, after that Sabbath they never even risked looking over the side of their ship. But in those days drink and fighting were as indissolubly united as curry and rice. The scrap was not because the strangers were Italians; the same thing would have happened had they been French or German. Well, sailors are not the only ones who, when they cannot make a man understand decide to be more explicit by punching him on the nose. Contempt for foreigners is a British characteristic which takes many shapes, and fighting, even if it does not breed affection inculcates respect, and what is better than respect?

One is reminded of the story of the officer who exhorted his charging troops in the Peninsular with "Now then! you men who eat English beef, make short work of those.....who suck oranges!"

Sen Brothers established the Chowringhee

Hotel in 1875 at the corner of Chowringhee and Dhurumtolla which passed into the hands of Morris Fienbarg in 1883. Mrs. Fienbarg was a magnificent woman both in features and physique with a pleasant manner. The hotel changed its name to the Hotel d'Europe and became almost a fashionable resort.\*

- One of the attractions was an Austrian string band of women; there were five barmaids also but they did not mix with the Jewesses in the band.

Mrs. Magri who at one time had a small shop in Bentinck Street where, among other things she sold cigars, then took the Wellington Hotel in Dhurumtolla and succeeded Fienbarg at the Hotel d'Europe in 1894. She changed the name to Hotel Bristol in 1897 and to Bristol Hotel in 1900.

Well below middle height, strongly built, with kindly blue eyes, and long past any concern about her personal appearance, she was always busy, bare-armed, ready to take on anything or anyone. Many a tough who thought it easy to turn the Bristol upside down woke up the next morning with swelled head aggravated by a swelled face. If the average rowdy didn't find one of her short-arm jabs enough, he would be cowed by her voice which, in anger, was as loud and metallic as a steam-blown brass clarinet. She had no scruples either about telling diners they had been there long enough—"A gentleman wants to come here" generally made them put a move on.

A tiffin of eighteen items and as-much-as-



you-like-to-eat, everything of excellent quality, and the unsurpassed Calcutta fillet steaks, saw prosperity set in with a rush.

G. F. Bowyer, an ex P. & O. steward was employed in the Grand Hotel in 1900 and left there to become diningroom steward at the Bristol in 1906. Mrs. Magri had about as much romance left in her make-up as would barely dust a watch glass, yet Bowyer proposed to her, or something like that happened. Although thirty years older, she insisted that he should turn a Jew before accepting his heart and hand. He went through it in so thorough a manner that had his dead body been pulled out of the Ganges he would have been classified as one of those Chosen People few would choose to be. There was a Society which, in my young days, collected money for the object of converting Jews to Christianity but their accounts showed that each conversion cost £30,000. Some cynic who thought he knew what he was talking about estimated that 30,000 Christians could have been converted the other way for the same money, but not in the thorough way Bowyer set about it. Yet, as the old woman said the first time she saw a monkey—"What funny things men will do for money."

Mrs. Magri left India with a fortune and settled in Vienna where she built a large block of mansions and was reputed to be doing well out of it. She lived to a great age, and died in 1938.

Bowyer prospered after she left. A very portly man he dressed extremely well, wearing a

diamond ring said to be worth £3000; that impressed most people. With a voice hardly big enough for a small child, he never gave himself away by saying anything and was never known to give anything away either. If he hadn't been Jewish before conversion he picked up Jewish caution soon after and was as keen on money as his adopted forebears.

With much good luck the management of Spence's Hotel fell into his hands; when he lost that he was given a job in the Great Eastern, said to be worth Rs. 2000 a month. While handling the bazaar money of those two rival concerns, his own place thrived, but when the billet in the G.E.H. "blew-up," it was hard to keep the Bristol on its legs. One morning in 1937 he was found dead in his bath and the bazaar shopkeepers began to "beat their breasts." Bowyer who, had long been a sort of uncrowned king of Calcutta caterers owed incredibly large sums.

Shortly before Bowyer died, he made his barman responsible for all bar debts. The poor fellow knew many out-of-works who were trusted if they signed for two drinks—one for him. Broken by drink he drowned himself in the Dalhousie tank. Curiously, most of the bills were paid owing to a fear of being in debt to a suicide.

The dining-room steward, an inoffensive, harmless fellow, had lent Bowyer Rs. 15000 without taking a receipt or any other acknowledgement. The loss of his life's savings overwhelmed him; when past sixty he was without work and in sudden poverty. Never a man of great re-

source, for six months he neither bathed nor shaved and ended by throwing himself off the top of a high building.

No trace was found of the £3000 diamond ring, there was an unseemly wrangle over the funeral, Bowyer's friends assuming that he had become a Jew for pecuniary reasons and for nothing else. The Jewish community were determined to have the body even if they fought for it and Bowyer lies buried in that crowded part of north Calcutta where few of his fellow-countrymen ever venture. That part of the Hotel d'Europe—Bristol history might well be termed a tragedy of prosperity.

## *THE GRAND HOTEL*

The first to bring a Calcutta Hotel nearly up to date was Arratoon Stephen, who was popularly, but erroneously believed to have arrived penniless in India and without friends, yet died worth a fortune.

For a time he worked and prospered as a jeweller and in 1894 bought No. 16, Chowringhee, of which the Theatre Royal and the Royal Hotel formed part.

The Theatre Royal was a tumble-down edifice with a worm-eaten stage through which during an amateur performance of a Shakesperian play, a horse, after misbehaving himself (which showed that he was something of a critic) disappeared through the rotten wood and played the devil's tattoo with his hooves on the corrugated iron walls of the theatre during the remainder of the evening. (As the papers put it, "We are able to report that the animal was safely extricated the following day.")

The Theatre Royal was burnt down shortly after midnight on January 2, 1919. As the premises were fully insured Stephen suffered no loss. The Humphrey-Bishop Company, showing there at the time lost everything including music and manuscripts.

Stephen then took No. 17 Chowringhee, a curiously shaped house which had long been occupied by Lakin, who never paid any rent

owing to some law suit between Indians claiming to own the property.

After No. 18 came into Stephen's hands, he put up the fine verandah above the shops in Chowringhee which must have cost a large sum as anything for the benefit of the city is considered fair game for Municipal taxing masters.

In 1906 a third story was added to the buildings facing Chowringhee arousing considerable interest as it was said to be dangerous—the foundations were not strong enough. A one-time partner in an important firm and the representative of the mercantile community on the Corporation, who made a special practice of denouncing any bit of Municipal corruption that came to light, with—"This Sir, could not happen in Clive Street." It was no good telling him that Clive Street could give the Municipality points when it came to a matter of forgetfulness in what was other people's money. "I am here to reform the Corporation, not Clive Street." My rejoinder to that was "You know which is the softer job of the two." Unfortunately, what couldn't happen in Clive Street happened to him, hitting so hard that he could barely afford to pay rent for one room in the street which, in recognition of his good work, had been named after him. He was reduced to travelling tandem about Calcutta—one foot before the other, and to taking four anna bribes.

When needs must the devil uses the whip, and poor ffield-ffoulkes (that wasn't quite how his name was spelt) was perpetually faced with those problems brought by the dhoby and the

bazaar. Stephen was a fair target so a stunt was started about a public danger brought on by overloading an old building. With much pluck he refused to dub up but the propaganda (the Latin for lies) had such an effect upon W. B. MacCabe, Chief Engineer of the Calcutta Corporation, that he never risked walking under the Grand Hotel verandah in case the building fell on him.

With Maurice Bandmann, Stephen gave Calcutta the Empire Theatre (now the First Empire) and by demolishing a number of mean buildings in Dalhousie Square, changed that into a thoroughfare more worthy of its name.

He enlarged his hotel in 1906 and was the first in India to bring an orchestra from England and he claimed to be the first to install a hydraulic lift; if he meant in a Calcutta hotel he was right, but Watson's Hotel in Bombay had one in 1889, while that of the Calcutta Port Commissioners dated from 1875 or 6.

Stephen put up Hotel Mount Everest in Darjeeling, certainly the finest building there. Woodlands, then the most select boarding house was little more than a tumble-down contraption of worm-eaten wood adorned with scraps of rusty corrugated iron. Drum Druid, adjoining the Chowrasta was another boarding house of the same ramshackle type where you could enjoy occasional cascades of icy water from the bathroom above yours. That happened to me more than once, yet in spite of such eyesores, complaints and sentimental regrets were heard that Stephen should have destroyed the principal

features of Darjeeling by modern buildings more suitable for a city on the plains.

The Grand Hotel in Calcutta, except on rare occasions was seldom more than a quarter full; but Stephen had many friends in Indian States who sometimes took a whole floor at colossal rates. What he lost on the swings he made up on the roundabouts.

Then came the Round-the-World tourist boom amongst "those English who come from America". Everybody had been told so much about their wealth, that money was no object, that all they looked for was an opportunity to get rid of it, and no freeborn citizen of the U.S.A. ever used an automobile more than a year, it therefore took quite a time for people in India to understand that most of those on the 'Tower de Lucks' had laboriously saved just enough for the fare. The trippers, too, had been stuffed full of fairy tales about the gorgeous East, so all parties barring the shipping boosters were disappointed.

When the first batch came, the feminine fashion in sola topees ran to size. The ten-gallon-lid of their native land would have looked like a pillbox by comparison. In evening dresses the ladies added to their charms by crowning their Court-dress outfit with a hideous topee shaped like an out-size coalscuttle. Their men folk in shirt sleeves sat at the main entrance of the hotel chewing tobacco and spitting like firstclass passengers. When parties went for a drive to see the sights, the old man was given the post of honour, perched up on the ticca gharry dickey alongside

the driver to whom was occasionally given a dollar as he had no boots on.

Until their country entered into the Great War, khaki was unfamiliar to them. Travellers who came from the bright and breezy West, honoured most of the men in khaki they saw in hotels with the honorific of "Guide".

Some of our Calcutta merchant princes volunteered to serve (non-dangerously) in the Indian Army by taking a staff job in Fort William which could have been better filled by men broken in the war. They drew Army pay while carrying on their regular bit of civilian piracy. It must be admitted that they saw dinner service and occasional Church service which gained for them a few well-wangled decorations.

One of these Fort William Diehards, thought that as he was serving his country (out) to the tune of a thousand a year he could do anything, so without knowledge he refereed a hockey match. What was good for Fort William was not good enough for the hockey ground; the crowd did not see right eye to left eye with his decisions, so chased him off the ground.

• When a man standing six foot three uses his legs with an irate crowd behind him, he can get over the ground and Teapott (that wasn't quite his name but it's near enough) showed them how to sprint. As an old soldier put it " 'E'd 'a played 'ell with the 'Uns 'ad they tried to catch 'im".

• Another of our Industrial Birds of Prey, dignified by his friends with the appellation of "The Owl" with no experience of any kind, wangled an appointment as Adjutant of a



Volunteer Corps where his bully-ragging and insults aroused so much hatred in the Other Ranks that he was warned to keep away from the Rifle Range. Being an expert in that game for which there are no rules—Safety First—he hopped it, but was given a Staff job in Fort William on Rs. 800 a month. After that he was always in uniform.

An expert bridge player he won a small packet from the Lincolnshires, but suspecting their standard of honesty lined up with his own, he wrote on the first of the month demanding his winnings. He received a bag full of pies—192 to the rupee. Feeling that he was insulted he reported the matter to General Strange who took no action.

Had these fellows tried to do something to ameliorate the condition of neglected troops passing through the city they would have been entitled to credit; but those below officer rank were of no more interest than had they been pariah dogs.

At a Shareholders' Meeting of one of his swindling Companies, a Bengali, taken in by the uniform, asked if he was going to the War. I happened to remark—"Our Chairman is only a battle-scared crook in fancy dress," which he didn't seem to like. I was surprised to find him so sensitive. To make my meaning clear I explained to a few Bengalis present exactly what I meant, repeating it so as to make sure. You'll hardly believe it but when I proposed a hearty vote of thanks to the Chair, he didn't even thank me, nor did he send me a Christmas card.

A perfect specimen of those Clive Street heroes, dolled up as if he'd stepped straight out of a cigarette poster—a real (stage) warrior to look at—one who led all but soldiers to believe he'd declined a Victoria Cross with nine bars (having always been in command of cracked troops in the Fielding Force) found himself one evening surrounded by a swarm of American ladies in the hall of Stephen's hotel, angrily twittering like mynas, each charmer with more to say than the others.

"Say, Guide! The Guys here are soaking twenny of us for an anna a glass for iced watter. We never pay for it in Sioux Maw or Medicine Gulch and even in London, England and Athens Greece we got it for nothing. Great Lands! We're gonna to see the Amurrican Consul about it right now!"

It happened thus. Stephen believing in the wealth of Americans looked forward to a boom in the bar. Like most things in life it kicked off the wrong way.

So great was the demand for iced water it was feared that the whole crowd would be either ice-bound or water-logged. The bar account remained dormant while the khitmagars threatened to strike against all work and no *baqsheesh*. The result was one anna a glass for iced water. The resultant clamour did no more than make Stephen obdurate. From the hotel keeper's point of view, considering the feelings of people who, two days hence would have vanished as completely as Shakespeare's shoe laces, was a waste of time.

When the next party arrived, moderate rates having been fixed long in advance, Stephen posted notices in every room warning residents that the purity of the drinking water could not be guaranteed, so he picked up a little by selling to the most affluent, soda water at two annas a bottle.

But there was something prophetic about Stephen's notice, for in 1937, by some mischance the Grand Hotel water gave a number of people enteric fever, resulting in several deaths.

During the war when Calcutta swarmed with soldiers of no fortune and other swashbucklers in khaki, full of beans and ravenous for beanos, there were not enough of the Mrs or Missrepresentatives of the insinuating sex with slightly cracked reputations to go round. Those who enjoyed a monopoly were against the restrictions imposed by Stephen so they did much to arouse illfeeling against him. Ready to believe anything bad of anybody provided it was told them by a good-looking girl, the soldier men were often disgracefully rude. One of them assaulted him, perhaps there were others. When the war was over and it became necessary to look round for something to do, they must have often wondered why they were so full of themselves. Thoughts of bygone arrogance must have added much to the gall and wormwood of unemployment.

Stephen had been trained as a jeweller, and in that business, politeness is at least half the outfit. Accustomed to handling wealthy, and many autocratic people he was able to counter rudeness with polished courtesy. Rude men seldom made

a successful retort once he summed matters up.

An irate temporary resident and gentleman rushed into the hotel office, introducing himself in the breezy language of camp and bivouac, and drew Stephen's attention to a teapot. On top of the tea leaves was a prize cockroach as big as your thumb, cruelly scalded to death in that visitor's early morning tea. Demanding to know what the hell Stephen had to say about it and how he'd feel were he fed on such rotten muck, with additional abusive languages Stephen put on his glasses and had a good look before replying.

"Well," he said, "five hundred rooms, five hundred teapots. One cockroach. Very good average." But it must be admitted that the complaint was justified. Even primitive Africans say, "Unless your stomach be strong do not eat cockroaches."

As a business man he had idiosyncrasies but once his word was given his money was as certain as daylight. Free from slapdash, he took time to consider, a habit that annoys those who never think until they are in a hopeless mess when they pay a man who pretends to do it for them. If he, by combining forces with the other side doesn't shove them farther into the mire their luck is in. As Stephen once remarked to me—"only those who get into a scrape with their eyes open find the safe way out."

In charitable movements he must have raised between two and three lakhs of rupees when the hotel was booming. War charities in parti-

cular being greatly helped by his efforts. The hotel business also benefitted for the last to be considered in charities are those for whom the money is collected. Stephen, personally, gained little; but it is safe to assert that a greater proportion of the sums he realised went into Charity funds than do in most of our big cadging concerns. At any rate, no one connected with Stephen's charitable efforts got £800 a year for sticking on stamps.

The expeditions to Mount Everest would have fared badly had it not been for Stephen's help. But once it is suspected that those working under the insatiable banner of the greatest of all swindles are doing well for themselves out of it, well, so far as gaining merit they might better have done nothing.

Stephen Wilkinson, the architect who made such a fine job of Hotel Mount Everest in Darjeeling, had trouble in getting the work through as he wished. Stephen hated parting with money; Wilkinson was always demanding it, and considered he had been hampered by needless monetary difficulties. The fact that financing big schemes is always difficult, even to rich men, may have not occurred to him.

When war started Wilkinson decided to finish his obligations to Stephen and join the Royal Flying Corps. Passing through Calcutta he put up at the Grand because he could stay there for nothing but he did not intend to have anything to say to Stephen. The trouble and worry about completing the building had sunk in too deep.

A day or two before he was to sail Stephen sent for him, feeling that it was possible they might never meet again. Wilkinson walked into the office. In his courteous way Stephen asked:—

“I believe you are going to the War?”

“Yes,” was the curt reply.

“Well, you’ll want a few drinks on the way, won’t you?”

Wilkinson told me afterwards. “Would you believe it? The old skinflint took a bag of sovereigns out of the safe, grabbed a few handfuls and insisted that I should take them. I could buy all I wanted up to £189 before spending any of my own money from that little present. I was so surprised I could hardly thank the old fellow!”

In 1926 Wilkinson and I met in our London Club. I told him how very ill Stephen was, never likely to recover, and if he would give me permission to publish that story it would make a graceful addition to the old man’s obituary notice. Wilkinson explained that a London firm of publishers had approached him regarding a book of an architect’s Indian reminiscences. That was seventeen years ago and as I have seen nothing about the book, I hope Mr. Stephen Wilkinson, if he reads these lines, will forgive me for telling his story.

In a letter published in the *London Observer* of June 14, 1936, no such conditions were imposed so I have no misgivings about using the following:—

“Apropos of Mr. Arthur Hodge’s book, *Lord*

*Kitchener* I should like to relate a true story about the late War Lord.

"As is well known, the late "K-of-K" was a great collector of china, and when Commander-in-Chief in India used to visit the house of a friend of mine in Calcutta (I refer to the late Aratoon Stephen, a well-known millionaire Armenian) who possessed a remarkably fine collection of Oriental china.

"During one of my visits "K-of-K" called and as usual we all proceeded to the room containing the collection. Among the exhibition was a small vase having a tubular stem and a bulbous base which "K-of-K" greatly coveted, but the owner would not part with it at any price.

"While examining the "piece" the stem unfortunately came in two, and the great "K" was left standing aghast with a piece in each hand, apologising for the accident, and offering to make good, as far as possible, the damage. Of course, Stephen made light of the matter until after the departure of 'K' when there was much lamentation and not a little blaspheming during which he asked me "what was to be done" about his most precious piece.

"I suggested that it would be a good idea to have the stem joined and the fracture covered with a gold band, stating that "This vase was accidentally broken by His Excellency Lord Kitchener of Khartoum, etc.," giving the date of the occurrence.

"This was done by a local jeweller, and so effectively that the vase was given a more prominent place in the collection than before, and for

all I know still occupies that position at No. 2 Camac Street, Calcutta, to this day.

Yours etc.,

(Sd.) *Stephen Wilkinson*, A.F.C., F.R.I.B.A.

Lord Kitchener was badly taken in by a Chinese firm in Dalhousie Square which shortly after being exposed closed down.

Stephen died in May 1927 in his 67th year, owning property valued at Rs. 1,00,93,000 but his debts were Rs. 74,30,568 so his fortune was not so big as was believed. He was a great benefactor to Calcutta which is more than can be said about those Britons who made huge profiteering fortunes during the War and left with a Knighthood, without benefitting a soul.



## CALCUTTA TAVERNS—*Contd.*

### *THE TIVOLI.*

Thirty-six years ago Solomon D. Potnoy, a Russian Hebrew, ran the Cosmopolitan Hotel in Bentinck Street, a shabby pub where sailors, vagabonds, little men with the mark of the beast written large all over them, pimps and other scoundrels could buy Death's Head Beer, and D. T. Whisky, with two guaranteed fights and a black eye in every bottle.

In his domestic circle Potnoy was an exemplary married man. Outside of that he was destitute of prejudices, even for irregularities. Anything with money in it was good enough for him. With an idea of putting on boxing shows, a form of amusement which runs in cycles in Calcutta, he conceived what might be termed a building plot and ran up a cheap shanty behind the pub. Stranded actors, glad to have some haven other than the key of the street, very low-comedians, musicians, whose Bach was worse than their bite, suggested a stage and a gallery, christened it (I hope the Jewish community will not object to that word) the Tivoli, and to the surprise of everybody it suddenly sprang from a vagabond's muck-heap into a fashionable ragging rendezvous.

A generation in Calcutta is roughly about ten years so the name of Potnoy is little known today. Thirty-six years ago the lads of the village looked forward to a pogrom at Potnoy's

where the performers, who generally sang loose songs in shaky voices were overwhelmed by the activities of the audience. Bentinck Street 'over a century ago was celebrated for its houses of entertainment. Wilson of the Great Eastern Hotel started there. The Freemasons Grand Lodge was at No. 55; so were most of the undertakers who flourished exceedingly. Yet Bentinck Street, even in its heyday, never saw such scenes of revelry by night as when Potnoy ran the Tivoli, vulgarly termed the "Dog's Opera" (or words to that effect).

To many faded actors, Potnoy's was a God-sent haven where they could boast about those days when they took leading parts in the best London theatres, while ignoring experiences in the East where the "pangs of hunger, the insolence of small creditors and the sneers of upstarts," filled them with sorrow, a sorrow they had taught to swim, that is when they had money, or, better still, when they met a sympathetic listener who had. To him they could confide the fact that they were resting before taking a leading part with Forbes Robertson, or in Grand Opera at Covent Garden, always somewhere far, far away. We are all inclined to believe that the tree in the back garden is no good for medicine.

• In spite of dire poverty they were always dignified. The stage is a hard school where hard work, hardship and hard-up teach without seeming to repel. A story is told of one who, while seated at the Tivoli bar, was asked if he "could change a fifty-rupee note. The management here say they can't do it."

"I'm sorry to be unable to oblige you, but really, (with a perfect stage bow) I am grateful for the compliment."

Professional women, finished artistes with voices as flat as Bengal would sing with approximate accuracy drivelling bits of morality set to crippled harmony. They showed preference for two-in-a-bar items, particularly if they were one of them. Poor souls! For a woman, of all kinds of bondage, vagabondage is the most cruel and the hardest from which to escape. What did it matter if their voices needed a few stitches, wobbling now and then on a true note like the Nux Vomica stop in a cheap harmonium when Aunt Sallies of vulgarity counted more in filling the house? Now and again, the artistes who always avoided giving themselves the brevet of "Mrs." would grow tired of acting the lady and, with a scarlet intonation in their conversation permit their behaviour to drop to the level of their musical ability. Then those Sahibs who wake in the morning in need of a livener heard the illegitimacy of their birth publicly announced by a more or less public woman in a public house; in full agreement with silence being golden they understood that the lady performers were off the gold standard. What did it matter? Everybody laughed, and laughter is a form of enjoyment.

Laugh! and the world laughs with you  
for laughter is ne'er out of place.

Weep! and your dearest friend will  
turn you a frozen face.

Indian ballad howlers cursed with the un-

measured malice of Oriental music reminiscent of souls in torture, followed performers who played Beethoven on a mouth organ and were lucky if they got half-way through their turn. Whoever showed there, and anybody could, male or female, deserved full marks for pluck for nobody knew which shape testimonials would take. Yet some of the girls, regular, irregular, and highly irregular made good matches (not before they should have) and brought up a family as creditably as others who never dreamed of being inside such a pandemonium. Curiously, too, they generally bagged a Don Juan, who, after many speculations at the shrine of Venus made one which had to be retained as an investment.

A writer in the *Statesman* described what must have been an ordinary Saturday beano at Potnoy's.

"The audience showed a marked tendency to run an opposition show to the bonafide entertainment. Unauthorized artists found their way on the back of the stage—one delivered an oration but was led to the back of beyond. Across the darkened stage figures are seen groping and exploding toy balloons, while another member of the audience danced on top of the piano.

• "While this was going on another gang marched in, halted, a bugler sounded the "Fall-in", and an organised effort was made to eject those who had already paid for their seats. Rugger scrums, broken chairs, tables, and glasses, resulted in Potnoy threatening to call in the police, who came but were extraordinarily

apathetic; one member of the force took off his coat and skull-dragged a "bloke" who had reported him a week or so before."

Anyone could, and did, perform there even were they possessed of no more histrionic ability than to take the part of a deaf mute at a funeral. The man who thought he could sing a song or was bursting to try in public was sure of three rupees and a drink, but he might receive so hearty a reception which, if he was not quick enough to dodge a lot of free gifts from the audience could end in concussion of the brain. Those who took themselves seriously might protest in the King's (private) English, but Potnoy had a man in the wings whose business it was to mollify angry and profane performers. He was an expert in appeasement and in dodging what was thrown from boxes, stalls and pit. Saturday nights were as rowdy as the King's birthday in Ireland but in those pre-cinema days and before the appearance of super-refined restaurants, the Tivoli cheerfully filled one of the many dull voids in Calcutta night life.

Potnoy's was a step-back of sixty years to the "Free-and-Easy" but without a chairman to keep order. Vulgarity extending to bad language greeted most of the performers who often gave back more than they got. The absence of refinement was its principal attraction. The more completely the feelings of others were disregarded the keener the enjoyment. The world loves vulgarity, but it must be brazen, untinged with shamefaced respectability. When the reporter of a London paper stated that the Bishop

of London hoped to see the end of this "b.....y war" his effort at propriety made matters worse.

Like so many of his race, a pice to Potnoy was a sum of money worth quarrelling about. Some of his artists bitterly complained that one week night there was but one in the audience—a half-doped Chinaman, but they were forced to go right through every item of their show.

Later on handbills were distributed with the heading.

*"TIVOLI THEATRE"*  
*"THERE WILL BE A COLLECTION!!!!"*

That took the eye. Potnoy *knew* that would take the eye. Well, the first essential of any letter is to attract attention, a matter generally more completely forgotten than the name of Queen Elizabeth's washerwoman. But even if his ancestors became flatfooted through wandering about the desert for forty years while on their way to the Unholy Land, Potnoy's head was screwed on all right, and a "Collection" meant something to him.

A friend who usually lived in Cawnpore gave an account of what happened during the night at the Tivoli.

• "Perhaps Potnoi (that is how the Cawnporean spelled the un-Christian name) had put that on the handbills when announcing the lecture because he didn't quite know how his patrons would take it, and failed to see the tactical error in giving the other side time to prepare. At any rate, a lecture was obviously a new departure

while the "collection" was almost startling. Perhaps old Potnoi wished to avoid responsibility by creating the impression that he had "lent" the theatre which, to some extent was true, if incredible.

"The lecturer was a chap who had been so damned silly as to walk from Rangoon to Calcutta—that is, he was like so many others who claim to be on walking tours, but was candid enough to admit that he had complicated matters with a push-bike. Had he hoped to ride it through the jungle, that just shows.....

"Unfortunately, not only did he speak badly, but he tried to be serious and impress on the audience what a stout fellow he was. Compared with many of those there he was about as tough as a bit of candle grease on a hot plate.

"Had he made an effort to be funny and treated the trip as a joke he might have got home. But his audience, with reiteration of the ninth letter of the alphabet, flattened out like stale beer, while the idea of a Collection was like salt in sore eyes.

"Still, for Old Potnoi's sake everybody seemed to be as sociable as a basket of kittens. The collection was started even before the lecture was over. There was no need to pass round hat, plate or bag. Response was spontaneous. The coins came first as sighting shots, then independently, and later in volleys. Finally, rounds of canister—half pice in paper bags that hurt more than an accurately thrown pice. The lecturer was forced to take cover and as he left the field he was heard to accuse the whole audience

of being born out of wedlock. But they had been told that so often—and there are none so blind as those who won't hear.

"Snipers and sharpshooters filled the upper stage boxes, port and starboard, and much of the ammunition found its way into the orchestra. Most of the casualties were in the front stalls: they were unprepared and unprovided with small shot; being Scots they saw no reason to retaliate with rupees, so started with bad language and prepared to chuck the pice-throwers out neck and crop, but, as usual, good humour prevailed and all went home happy.

"The story went round that Potnoi collected Rs. 3-8-6 on the stage and suggested to the lecturer that the money should be divided. "I'll take the odd? How does that suit you?" This was agreed to and Potnoi handed over the evens -8-6. The "odd" Rs. 3 went into his pocket, and that was the end of

### *"THERE WILL BE A COLLECTION."*

"I must say that I never enjoyed myself more anywhere."

On another occasion someone in an upper box lassoed the bass fiddle in the orchestra, then, adding insult to ridicule asked the owner to come and fetch it. Quite pathetically, he protested, and the trick having served its turn, the Bull Fiddle which, for once had been under his chin, was lowered into the orchestra amidst cheers.

It was not fashionable in 1906 to appear in



public without collar and tie, even in the hot weather so when three nautical gents, one, a ginger giant with huge brawny arms, hairy chest and heather growing out of his ears walked into Potnoy's they attracted attention.

Taking seats under a box occupied by six Bank "chaps" (who had gone in without paying), Bill Davies, son of a Welsh padre and a source of anxiety to the Bank of Bengal pulled a plant out of a pot in front of his box, and carefully dropped it, earth and all, on the head of the giant. Unfortunately, Bill took too long watching the effect of his bomb and was spotted. Dodging the rush he escaped, but half an hour later the three caught him in the bar sipping a peg.

"By chrimes!" they shouted. "That's him!" and while asking—"What ther.....? Who ther.....? O you did, did yer.....? in the orthodox manner before proceeding farther, the big fellow's arms were firmly held by his friends so that under-sized Davies should not be killed in one swipe. Without a second's hesitation Bill gave him a hard punch on the nose, and having emulated Jack the Giant Killer took a leaf out of Mr. Acceleration Walker's book and went home leaving the sailors to argue things out between themselves.

One night when it was hot enough to make a sack of sawdust sweat an old-time regular soldier insisted on singing. Standing strictly to attention he bawled loud enough to wake a nightwatchman in tones as musical as a bale of jute. His effort was about the Light Brigade—

“Six ’underd stalwart warriors, , (gasp)  
Of Ingerland’s pride ther best, (gasp)  
They grasped the lance and sabre (gasp)  
On Balakalaver’s chest.”

Before he got any farther a cheerful bungler in the art of interruption hit him full in the face with a tomato. The man of war couldn’t find words to express his feelings—that is, good words—but the appeaser came from the wings with a cat-that-ate-the-canary sort of grin to assure him that it was only a rude man, all meant in good part, when the appeaser was landed with a brinjal which seemed to curb his efforts.

The soldier manfully finished his song and then offered to fight any six of the bastards in the bloody house (loud cheers) with one arm tied behind his something back, and to give him credit, he would have made an effort. The friendship in a couple of bottles of beer soon made him feel as he ought to have felt without them and he went back to the Fort, full and happy.

No writer could exaggerate the wildness of the scenes that took place in that Bentinck Street shanty. The language to and from the audience was staggering and often amidst the din Potnoy would be heard threatening to tell the General (who was often there with the Commissioner of Police) or the head of some firm about the disgraceful behaviour of their subordinates. Even today, those who took part often gasp through their laughter. And to see the expressionless faces at picture shows, makes one regret when

recalling the hilarity of Potnoy's, that a lot of the capacity for enjoyment has departed. Men are not what they were.

Among those who did a turn at the Tivoli when matters there were reaching a climax was Miss Gaur Jan a dark-complexioned Eurasian woman with a fine figure, large lustrous eyes, and a happy disposition. The daughter of William Robert Lewart, an engine driver, by Malkajan, a Mahommedan women who became a Christian but embraced Mahommedanism subsequently, she was highly intelligent and discarded any intention of trying to get into European circles (if she ever had any) studying Indian songs and dancing with such success that "she possessed considerable influence and moved in the highest Indian society."

Indian courtesans and nautch girls are not the brazen outcasts of Christian countries. They are cleanly, proud of their appearance, often clever entertainers with good manners and do not consider themselves lost souls. Why should they? In the matter of prostitution India might teach the world something. But is the world anxious to be taught anything?

For example—less than two years ago a Member of the Delhi Legislative Assembly (almost the Indian House of Lords but not quite) stated—"I keep brothels and am not ashamed of it!" It was reported that the house rose *en bloc* to know where they were but that was only, said 'jokative'. Still more recently a "public woman" was a candidate for a seat in a municipality.

Far above ordinary nautch girls in education and superior in culture to most of the Indians who welcomed her to feasts and festivals, Gaur Jan sang Indian songs to perfection, could move her hips in the manner so greatly admired by her clients that gold, silver, and fine raiment were heaped upon her. She owned her own and other houses in Free School Street where in a tuneful voice she practised Indian and English songs, often singing to a gramophone and, to some extent was respected by her neighbours. Like many others

“She never followed wicked ways  
Except when she was sinning.”

What a story Gaur Jan could have written! On more than one occasion I suggested that she might give me a rough, unvarnished outline of her life; her experiences in Indian palaces and houses must have been amazing. While she was un-moral she disliked publicity and although I assured her that she had the matter for a book of a generation, particularly if she gave real names, she was not to be drawn.

Even the assurance that the only introduction necessary would be two lines:—

“I once was as pure as the driven snow,

But that was a hell of a time ago,”  
did not attract her, so a best-seller of Indian social life has gone due west.

An Armenian took her (by request) to see a Raja to whom she played one tune on the *sitar*. She was barely an hour in the house and her escort was in the room all the time. The Raja took a roll of notes from a safe and pressed them

into her hand. Later, Gaur Jan asked the Armenian, "What do you think that old fool gave me?—fourteen thousand rupees!" She has demanded and been paid a lakh of rupees for one performance and often turned down engagements for large sums being unable to fulfil them all. At one time her fortune was estimated at between £150,000 and £200,000. Many Bengalis asserted that no pure-blooded Indian woman ever obtained so much by singing and dancing.

With her eyelids touched up with *surma* (antimony) and *kajul* (soot from burned deer's horn) *Mizi* (black cork powder) between her fine teeth to show up their whiteness, her lips reddened with *pan*, she used to loll behind a pair of the finest horses in Calcutta while eating the air in her barouche. One of her possessions was a diamond waistbelt said to be worth many lakhs of rupees and she wore every variety of Indian jewellery with obvious disregard for its value.

Such as Gaur Jan must have been in Thomas Hardy's mind when he wrote:—

"O 'Melia, my dear, this does everything crown!

Who could have supposed I should meet you  
in town?

And whence such fair garments, such  
prosperity?

'O didn't you know I'd been ruined?' said she.

Advancing years began to hit her hard. Like other women she resented learning that youth is the only beauty and, as often happens, reverted to type. She took up with youngsters,

Eurasian and Indian who, used to nothing, squandered her money like chicken feed. Finding her popularity waning and still craving for publicity she came down to showing at Potnoy's.

Judging by what appeared in the papers after her death early in 1930 there was no real need for her to be seen there. At that time she was employed as a Durbar musician at Mysore. A relation living in Bombay claimed her estate; so did three husbands; and in the course of legal proceedings it was "anticipated that a few more claimants will be reaching here from Calcutta shortly".

At the age of 57 she was said to have married a man of 24. "The Iman of the Thousand Lights Mosque said he solemnised the marriage between Gaur Jan and Kumbar Ali..... He produced a marriage certificate bearing the signatures of two witnesses.....Dancing girls were allowed to marry, also women in advanced years could marry young men. He further stated that he asked Gaur Jan whether she had been married before to which she replied—"I have not been married before. I have lived a loose life and you must pardon me" (which was very sweet of her). As a bride she couldn't say fairer than that, now could she? Nevertheless, like other professional musicians, she often worked in the cause of the greatest of all swindles—charity.

• On St. Patrick's Day 1923 an Indian paper, with that extraordinary clumsy "courtesy" often noticeable amongst Indians, contained the following:—

*"SALVATION OF INDIAN WOMANHOOD".*

BENEFIT MUSICAL SOIREE BY MISS GAUR JAN.

"It was rare musical treat that was provided by Miss Gaur Jan, a name to conjure with in the world of music, last night at the Star Theatre.

"A movement had been set afoot under the inspiration of the Provincial Congress Committee to collect funds to promote the cause of Indian womanhood. And last night's performance by India's Prima Donna was held in aid of the Fund. Some people may have turned up their nose at the idea of tainted money. But the substantial addition to the fund that this occasion made will outweigh such paltry consideration. That the performance of Gaur Jan was all that was expected of her goes without talking. We only wish that the public in Bengal followed the example of this gifted lady." One can make pretty sure that with the Hindu custom of banning widows from re-marrying even if no more than seven years old when widowed thousands of them will, even if they don't happen to be musical. But one must give credit to that journalist for possessing a very broad mind.

A Bengali solicitor and politician, introducing Mrs. Besant at a Calcutta Town Hall gathering made a similar bloomer when he said:—"Mrs. Besant is a public woman and we all know how hard these public women have to work." He was, of course, ignorant of the fact that colloquially, there is as much difference between a "public man" and a "public woman" as there is

between a public conveyance and a public convenience.

Sir Bamfylde Fuller had the quickest mind in the world. He completely overwhelmed Lord Morley and told me a yarn of a happening when he was Lieutenant-Governor of East Bengal. While on tour, the Municipality welcomed him with gorgeous banners, and, under a flowery canopy was in large letters:—

“Welcome to Our Great B. F.”

While Gaur Jan was what might be termed the misleading lady at Potnoy's, a dozen men who had been celebrating a birthday, anxious to add to their overdraft at the Bank of Jehannum, turned up full of good cheer to spend the shank of a happy day. To a party of soldiers they sent a dozen of beer with hints to keep the home fires burning, but whatever choruses there may have been to Gaur Jan's vocal contortions they left the audience bewildered, and what almost looked like ingratitude—dumb.

Few there appreciated Indian music even when an artiste like Gaur Jan interpreted it. The turns, twists, groans and sounds like an old-time milkman in his dotage in long drawn-out monotony which ended in a sort of jackal sonata upset many. Among them was Tinkler, an Irish Quaker, who, weighing 18 stone had achieved some local notoriety and the championship of the Quakers by getting through three bottles of whisky during tiffin (two of them being mine :) leaned out of a box, and waggled his big head to bawl, in drunken tones—“orrerr-bull”. A soldier, more of a gentleman, threw



a beer bottle into Tinkler's box. A flower pot came in return and a military and uncivil scrap started. Chairs came from the boxes, one catching a Highlander on the head just as he was about to polish off a civilian in a dress suit. A comrade attempting to look after him was arrested. Blood, hair, gilets, and brass buttons began to fly. Everybody lashed out at anybody and after that, as a witness said, they commenced fighting; the matting, which had not been brushed for years came over into the stalls, smothering everybody in dust. When the police succeeded in quelling the riot and the soldiers were on their way back to the Fort, some of our leading citizens were consumed with laughter to find their most respectable friends with a black eye, being more than surprised the next morning to find themselves with two.

The unfortunate Highlander, with a fractured skull had to be invalided out of the service: military police were too often busy at Potnoy's and although the end came later like a long-tailed dog, the place fell into disfavour.

Potnoy was able to retire to Egypt with a considerable fortune. With the exception of a few unfortunates who lost their jobs through finding more trouble at the Tivoli than they took in with them, little harm was done and there are many to-day who lament the departure of those good old days when men could go out for an evening and thoroughly enjoy themselves.

## MOFUSSIL HOTELS.

Captain Williamson in his *East India Guide* (1810) gives an idea of what it meant to travel upcountry. "In travelling by water, many preparations require necessary attention previous to departure. No furnished house, lodgings, public vehicles or inns, in short, no places for the convenience of travellers are to be expected in any part of India, with the exception of the taverns and punch-houses already described. Therefore for an excursion by water, a bajrow must be hired, either by what is called teekah, or so much for the trip with some allowance for demurrage, or at a monthly sum, generally rated at ten rupees per oar....."

"Newcomers who still have the furniture they used on board ship will be lucky. All must sit upon their trunks or on whatever may be at hand. Candles, candlesticks, tinware, glasses etc. are invaluable. As to table cloths, there being no table they may be dispensed with, as also knives and forks, there being no plates, and probably curry and rice, prepared by the boatman, will form the bill of fare. Those who are fond of savory dishes may here gratify themselves with a repast in high estimation among the gentlemen of India:—viz. a dandy's curry. Those, however, who have been in the habit of eating made-dishes at a distance from the culinary operations, may not altogether relish the manner of preparation nor be invariably pleased with the appearance of the cook. His habiliments

will probably consist of a cloth wrapped round his waist, then passed between his thighs, and a small cap, if the party be a Mussulman. If a Hindu, the entire dress may be composed of a small cord tied round his waist, for the purpose of supporting a narrow piece of cloth passed between his thighs. Hepetic eruptions, in large patches, all over the back, breast, and arms, together with the obvious symptoms of a more troublesome cutaneous complaint about the fingers, etc. are by no means rare, yet never disqualify the scratching sufferer from officiating as cook to the crew! Were such trifles to be objectionable, the dressing of a dinner might be somewhat difficult".

Fifty years ago upcountry hotels did not pretend to give anything better than what guests might have in their own homes. Occasionally they were no better than the local dak bungalow. My experience of them has been confined to those between Peshawar and Calcutta, with occasional trips to the Central Provinces, but it may be assumed that those in South India were no better.

In a few notes by Lieut. Col. W. J. Buchanan, I.M.S. he relates that S. Smith let out a Darjeeling hotel to Wilson, of Wilson Hotel, Calcutta. "The hotel was a fair sized one, containing in 1841, 14 single and 7 double rooms and was probably the same which disappointed Hooker on his arrival there on the 16th April, 1848. He had been informed that there was a "furnished hotel" in Darjeeling and had, in English fashion brought neither servants nor bedding.

Captain Hathorn devotes over two pages of his *Handbook* to a denunciation of it.

"There is neither (he wrote) an Hotel or Dak Bungalow properly so called.....There is what is called a Dak Bungalow belonging to D. Wilson & Co." The accommodation is described as "inferior both in quantity and quality, the cuisine is bad, the khansama's charges are exorbitant" (this is not surprising as the *khansama* was an ex-convict "who had been twice in jail"). The people of 1863 possibly expected much, for Captain Hathorn remarks that "the gentry who have been accustomed to the sumptuous dinners, the silver plate, the iced champagne of Calcutta are naturally disgusted with the stringy sheep, the muscular goat, the indigestible bread and the altogether-to-be-abominated fowl with which they were regaled."

To-day, Darjeeling is, if anything, one of the cheap hill stations although the catering everywhere is far from good. Hill stations seem to turn white people parsimonious. Mark Twain complained, after his return from Darjeeling that he did not find the mountains particularly high. He thought his hotel bill beat them, but as he also said he asked a very old man if he had been long there and was told "Stranger, when I first came here Kinchuniunga was a hotel in the ground," one might strike an average between the two.

J. F. Wyman, a Calcutta bookseller, wrote an account of a trip to Simla in 1865 under the title of *Calcutta to the Snowy Range, by an old Indian*. On arrival at his hotel he says;—"Mine host looked at us strangely, though not unwel-

comely, wondering doubtless what in earth had induced us to visit Simla at such a time. He suggested that perhaps we should like a fire and said if he could find any wood that was not covered with snow we should have it. Any place more undesirable for a residence in winter so far as comfort is concerned I cannot imagine."

Wyman was one of that numerous type of Anglo-Indians who pick up the mentality of a village bania with their first month's pay, a meanness that develops with years, giving an ordinary man a pain in the mind.

On the journey he looked upon poor coolies as extortionators because they asked for a few pice as *bacsheesh*, to which they were entitled, while Wyman was proud of himself for bilking them. But fancy a prosperous man who was so lost to dignity as to brag about it in his book! He states—

"Servants even in the Presidency towns far exceed in power and practice of annoyance Mayhew's *Greatest Plague* but in the hills whither he has been seduced by offers of high wages and warm clothing, your servant has become truly your master, and is ever ready to fleece you to his heart's content."

Such men are always fleeced. With characteristics which place them far below those whom they employ, they ask for it.

According to a British cavalry officer who was in Simla 100 years ago, "Simla is indifferently stupid for the first few weeks, for despite the maxim that everybody knows everybody, nobody

knows anybody for about that time, and society is accordingly stiff and hollow, if not quite as deceptive as a horsehair petticoat. But towards the end of the season, just when it is time to bid an eternal farewell, people get up an eternal friendship."

Sir Edward Buck, in *Simla Past and Present*, tells this about the standard of cleanliness that was considered good enough for anybody in that Dead Sea of social arrogance.

"A story used to be told about Lowrie's Hotel in Simla which must have applied to many others. A lady resident was asked (about 1870) if it were true that she had taken up a dhurrie (a cotton floor cloth) and actually had it beaten outside. He was told that not only was that one, but a second, and a third which had been interred for years in the dust of ages. Old Lowrie was indignant as, he said, they had never been taken up during the eighteen years he had run the place." It was evident that Lowrie, like Indians, had a great respect for age. So they have in England when it is in a bottle.

Probably the kitchen which was then, (and often is now) the only place in the house the Mem Sahib never looks into was as bad as the bedrooms. Most of the sudden deaths from cholera originate in the kitchen and even today in the best hotels there is immense room for supervision. It would be a wise ruling to stop all public dinners in India. Medical men would find that affect their income, but he is a wise man who dines before he goes to one.

Barrett & Co. who traded in most lines may

have catered for travellers in 1838. Their billiard room was a fashionable resort and Dr. Hoffmeister wrote in 1845:

"Here an hotel has recently been set up for the accommodation of strangers a thing utterly unheard of in the plains of Hindustan (sic). A Frenchman is at the head of the establishment, and we find ourselves very well off in his house, at least so long innured to sleeping on the moist ground, am unconscious of and proof against any dampness of the floor."

Carey's *Simla Guide* of 1870 gives details of Lowrie's Hotel. Barrett & Co. built a hall for social gatherings, then enlarged it for the accommodation of visitors. As the "pavilion" it was acquired by MacBarnet, who changed the name to the "Royal Hotel". Later J. W. Lowrie owned it. Lowrie died in February, 1924, aged 96.

Carey credits Munro with being the greatest philanthropist Simla ever had"; he founded the Royal Hotel, the Fountain Hotel, and built Harding's Hotel, (then Bondgate), was a prime mover in the assembly rooms scheme and, in 1860 promoted the 'Old Brewery'.

Chevalier Federico Peliti who came to India on the staff of one of the Viceroy's commenced business in Regent House and for many years spent all his profits on an estate purchased for 2 lakhs of rupees in 1892. Each new block was named after Viceroys. Among improvements was the erection of machinery for the manufacture of ice.

During the winter of 1922 a fire destroyed his Grand Hotel. Unfortunately the building

was only partially insured, so the loss was heavy. Peliti was a fine character and much respected.

R. Hotz, the photographer, founded the Hotel Cecil; Mrs. Hotz who was all capacity so improved the business that J. Faletti bought it for 2½ lakhs of rupees, and spent 6 lakhs on improvements.

"In 1916 he brought that and Faletti's Hotel in Lahore into the Associated Hotels of India Company, (capital 60 lakhs) and became the Managing Director of the combine, which also included Maiden's Hotel, Delhi, Flashman's at Rawalpindi, Corstorphans, and the Longwood at Simla, with the Cecil at Murree. Today, the Cecil Hotel at Simla is par excellence the hotel of the East." *Simla Past and Present*.

A typical Mofussil hotel was "Taff" William's at Raneeganj, about 130 miles from Calcutta. He had a standing advertisement in all the three Calcutta daily papers claiming that his was The Place to Spend a Happy Day, To those who found happiness in a coal dust road leading up to it, a few coal dust paths, bare walls, a bed with a mattress about as thick as a blanket, a chest-of-drawers, a chair and no newspapers they had nothing to complain about. Taff had no use for books never having read one. If you weren't interested in the labels on the bottles, you were at the end of the hotel's literary resources.

In the hot weather the hotels in Allahabad were deserted. Clarke's at Benares was less unpleasant as he had quite a lot of stories to tell in the evening when sitting on the chabutra. An



old Mutiny veteran he had forgotten all the discomforts and revelled in the glory, and his summer terms were Rs. 4/- per day.

By far the best of the Mofussil hotels was the Royal, Lucknow. In the winter the races brought men who spent money, and they expected something for it.

Fifty-five years ago and right up to the 1897 earthquake when everything fell flat, Fenton's was the hotel in Shillong. It was a comfortable place with good food.

One day in the lounge, a Government servant was reading the hotel copy of the *Englishman*; a tailor's traveller asked, civilly, if he might have it when done with. After reading the paper again from cover to cover the official walked towards the door where he dropped the paper on the floor, proud of having aired his superior social position.

The following day the tailor was on the spot when the paper came in. Seating himself in the same chair he read, and read, and then studied. The official grew impatient but it was not until the dinner bell rang that the tailor stood, rolled the paper into a ball, and with "Catch!" an over-arm throw put it into the official's hands. He had his lesson, and needed it.

From June 1884 to the end of 1887 most of my time was spent in Burma. There were four principal hotels in Rangoon. Jordan's, nearest to Botatong considered itself select the rate being five rupees a day. Evershed's and the British Burma were one rupee cheaper and the British India near the northern corner of Fytche Square

was but three rupees but they did not cater for teetotallers.

Compared with Calcutta, Rangoon food prices were higher and food at all the hotels was always remarkably poor. At Jordan's the daily surprise at tiffin was minced meat and banana fritters with occasional brinjals. An old Armenian lady was the proprietress assisted by her son who had never worked at anything, even at school. The residents put on a lot of airs, keeping entirely to a small group of most exalted Government subordinates who were expected to dress as well as those who drew five times their pay. Poor devils! Nothing to do, nowhere to go, nothing to talk about they believed themselves important in their exclusiveness.

Advised to try Evershed's, I was fixed up in a room the size of a cupboard. John Evershed was a strongly built man with a full black beard. He always sat in the bar with his wife, her sister (Mrs. Ware) and his wife's father, an old man well past seventy. The first time I went there was with a B. I. officer. We sat at a table close to the family and ordered two peps. Apparently the quartette at the next table had one each and billed us for the six. As we had said no more than "Good evening," we declined to pay. There was no end of a row as that, apparently, was the rule of the house. When told we were not gentlemen it was easy to retort with—"that doesn't prevent us from mixing with you on equal terms."

The food was no better than Jordan's but the company, mostly ship captains, was. Food

that wasn't eaten the first three days returned to the table until it was. A long decayed ox tongue decorated the dining table until some irate guest pitched it out of the window. It fell between the wooden walls of the hotel and a signboard; every crow in Burma came for that delicacy and on investigation the blame was wrongly placed on me and I had to clear out.

An incident showing the lawlessness of the times occurred at Evershed's. An officer, said to be a pay-master of either the *Woodlark*, or the *Ranger*, gunboats stationed at Rangoon for the Burma war, quarrelled with a stranger who threw him out of the first floor window. He fell and broke his back on the brick edge of the open drain. So far as I remember, no inquiries were made; he was dead; the name of the man who killed him was unknown (or suppressed) and that is all there was to it. The body lay for hours before anyone came to attend to it.

The British Burma, run by Armenians was my next experience. The less said about it the better, but as none of those who managed hotels at that time had ever lived in one, well, they just didn't know anything about it.

I take the following experiences from the first book I tried to write—*It was Like This*—now long out of print. Luckily, perhaps, a merciful Providence has helped me to forget many experiences of visits to Akyab, Kyouk Phyou, Sandoway, Bassein, Moulmein, Tavoy and Mergui, ports on the Arrakan and Burma coast.

In all of them Europeans posted there

boasted of the local brand of fever which never left your bones once it got into them.

Akyab being a rice port had characteristics of its own. The broken rice and husks from the mills rotted in a creek and on the sea shore stinking like dead snakes; cholera was rampant. My first visit was made under dramatic circumstances. A cyclone was blowing at the time—that was in October, 1884, the second during that monsoon. The kindly British-India captain advised me to stay on board until the morning but I foolishly decided to go on shore. It was just getting dark. Half a dozen sampans capsized around me, corrugated iron roofs were flying about, some of them being carried for three miles. The next day I learned that many boatmen were drowned and scores of natives killed by falling houses and trees.

Reaching the jetty soaked to the skin I managed to secure a ticca gharry which in howling wind, took me to the hotel. Pushing open the door I saw an Indian half-suspended from the ceiling by two cords tied round his thumbs. A little fat European, drunk, and cursing was punching the unfortunate man in the stomach. Knowing nothing about the matter I butted in, pushed the man over, cut the cords and released the victim. The little blackguard turned out to be the landlord of the hotel—name of Bunce—which fitted him. He explained that he suspected the servant had stolen a ring and was trying to make him confess.

For accommodation I was shewn a miserable room with the ceiling leaking and the bed soak-

ing wet. Declining to stay in such a place I drove through fallen trees to the dak bungalow where the chowkidar told me there was nothing but a bed and a chair in it. Officials only used the place and they brought everything with them. That necessitated driving back to the hotel where Bunce received me with jeers, saying that as I didn't ask him about the dak bungalow he let me find out for myself.

Bunce's daughter, evidently by a negress mother, was a dwarfed hunchback who played a fine game of billiards in spite of the fact that when she stood erect her eyes were in a line with the billiard table cushions. Most of the time she used the rest, and carried round a cane stool to stand on.

The evening of the second day a fight started between a German and a Portuguese captain. Chairs were broken; Bunce joined in and got flattened out while the daughter, unperturbed, played billiards with a Yank skipper.

During a visit to Colonel Furlong I told him how things were in the tavern and he fixed it up for me to stay with two local residents where I was comfortable but they let me in for more than what an hotel would have cost.

While taking away my scanty kit Bunce offered quite a decent room if I cared to stay. He hadn't given it to me before because he said the worst room should always be the first to let. The good could take care of themselves. My farewell was brief—"Take a good look at me now as you'll never set eyes on me again."

Crossing the Atlantic in 1919 a fellow pas-

senger asked had I ever been in Burma and did I meet anybody named Furlong. On my saying I had he asked what sort of a man he was. I told him. "That was my father," he said, and walked away; so far as I remember he never spoke to me again.

In 1884 the only hotel in Moulmein was owned by Benjamin, who claimed to be a French native of Mauritius, but, if he had any real French blood in him he kept it dark. The hotel was a misbegotten haunt forgotten about the time of the first Burmese War, leaky as a basket when it rained, full of bugs and mosquitoes, with no pretence at all to cleanliness, but—that or nothing.

Mrs. Benjamin and family apparently lived on ngapee, an odorous delicacy otherwise called balachong. The house reeked of it. Talk about a guano ship afire! !

Although there were quite a number of ships loading rice and teak in the Salween, none of the captains slept in the hotel at night. They were lucky in being able to sleep on board their own ship. No tea was obtainable. Chota hazri was a glass of rum and milk, appreciated, charged for and badly missed when a change to more temperate surroundings had to be made.

Three weeks of the Moulmein hotel seemed quite a long time but the curry was good and the prawns on the table every day were the finest I have ever tasted.

In 1885 I was told to go to Delhi, a "station on the East Indian Railway," and when I got out of the train on February 7, 1931, to see the Inauguration of New Delhi it struck me then as

being little more than a station on the railway. There was the real mofussil atmosphere; the same sort of people who are so full of their social importance that they fear strangers may not recognize it, so they freeze into the shell of exclusiveness to grow guarded and reserved.

Fifty-eight years ago there was the usual railway refreshment room and, so far as I remember, one hotel run by the brothers Maiden. The younger of the two brothers tall and bony, could tear a pack of cards. The cost of the cards prevented him from doing it more often. A Czar of Russia was said to have been able to perform the same feat but I never met any one but Maiden strong enough to do it. The hotel was well run and far above the standard of the best Mofussil hotels. The rate was Rs. 7 per day. Even today one never hears a complaint and the rates are decidedly moderate. If the Maidens are alive today they must regret having parted with a small gold mine.

In *Delhi Past and Present* H. G. Fanshawe, writing in 1902 states: "The principal hotel is Maiden's, well situated in the Civil Station close to Ludlow Castle, and excellently managed. Laurie's Hotel is outside the Mori Gate." and several others. The management of most of them changed too often to permit him to say much about them.

Few who visit New Delhi are particularly interested in ferreting out the musty chapters in which the chivalry of the Moghuls is recorded. Timour, Baber, Humayun, Akbar, Jehangir, Shah Jehan and Aurangzeb were all great men.

Far more are there who grumble about the climate. "The pukka fever of the Shalimar" about which old-timers wrote and from which they died has been successfully tackled by modern science, but even today one knows people who suffer from Delhi sores which do not heal. None consider Delhi a health resort and complaints about dearness of living are constant.

There are some details about the eighth Delhi which of are interesting and worth bringing to light, lest we forget.

Although Lord Hardinge claims paternity, he can hardly be considered the originator of the scheme for the transfer of the Capital, disappointed though he was when he found Calcutta to be a place where people do not indulge in hero-worship. There are far too many successful men in the City on the Hooghly for a cult of that sort outside of their own offices; but even this drawback, combined with the need for sleeping in a bird cage or a meat safe—I forget the exact words used by Lord Hardinge about that—(I know he also complained of a jackal howling in Government House compound)—was hardly sufficient to lead that gentleman to work out such a scheme. Moreover, he knew that war with Germany was inevitable—he said he did—then why should he start a huge, useless scheme when he was aware, as he must have been aware, that the country would need every anna it could spare or scrape together? He also said in Council in 1915 that the war could not last many months, and he proudly announced that he was going to make Mesopotamia blossom like the rose; so per-



haps he was hazy about everything. He certainly did much to fertilize that dreadful country, with the bodies of British and Indian soldiers. Nevertheless, the putative father of New Delhi is Lord Hardinge although he has not been served with an affiliation order. But who are the parents? It happens that a senior official of the Indian Civil Service told me who was at the back of it, the motive being resentment over snubs received in Calcutta when grovelling adulation was expected.

There cannot be any place in the world—never has been and never will be again with the social exaltation of New Delhi. So many of the officials have spent their early years in small places permeated with the obsequiousness of Indians who “come to you with a beg, and if your Highness will be graciously pleased to grant my humble request I shall for ever pray to the Lord God Almighty, a gentleman your Honour very strongly resembles.” To be just, these petitioners grovel even more humbly to their local raja and Brahmins. They know that when you have to bow—bow low. Therefore, when an official is promoted to a job in New Delhi he finds the same double-distilled compound potted essence of exaltation in best clothes, and the devastating isolation of Simla on a grand scale and learns that if he does not conform to the super-refinements of the Imperial City he won't get very far.

Even the servants who hang about hotel verandahs are impregnated with the super-exaltation virus. They furtively watch to see how

much deference you are entitled to, or whether they can afford to ignore you altogether. Delhi, although the official capital of a continent is still a mofussil station and life there is something like a wag's description of a Board of Directors: "A board," he said, "is long, narrow and wooden."

One subject is totally banned and barred—criticism of New Delhi. No corner of the blanket may be lifted to expose the defects in a scheme which is a monument to human folly and conceit and which, after costing £100 millions is to be made more and more beautiful before it is half completed. What can be expected from a scheme that was "conceived in haste, born in waste and christened in bloodshed and poverty"?

The belief in evil omens is almost universal, but nowhere is that belief more general than in India. The news that the British were to establish the eighth Delhi led Hindus to take advantage of an old Hindu prophecy that the eighth Delhi would see the return of a Hindu Raj. What will happen when the Hindus come into power does not appear to be discussed but they believe they can hire the British navy and will succeed after fighting it out with the Mahomedans. There is no denying that the number of ill omens and disasters which followed the beginning of the eighth Delhi are enough to support the belief that misfortunes would follow. The sequence of coincidences has led me to publish them in these scanty details about Delhi hotels, in the hope that the digression may be found interesting enough to be pardonable. History has

proved that. "Death roosts in Delhi and there preens its wings."

What does affect visitors from the clean orderly towns of South Africa and the United States is the dirt and appalling poverty on one side and the wasteful grandeur on the other.

Miss Eleanor Franklin Egan, an American journalist who was present during the 1911-12 Durbar, described Delhi as

*"THE HISTORY OF MILLENIUM  
WRITTEN IN DEBRIS."*

and appears to have been much impressed by the shadow of evil. She states—"Some person native to the soil is sure to get hold of you sooner or later and whisper an awesome secret. They say that there is a certain little flower which blooms nowhere else in India save on the plains of Delhi, and never even then except in prophecy of the destruction of a city of Delhi. They tell you this in all solemnity, believing it. Then they said that when the King-Emperor was gesticulating with his historic trowel and saying that he wanted modern Delhi to be as fine as any Delhi that had preceded it, this little posy of evil omen was brightening the landscape for the first time within the memory of living man. Those who like to see an end to British Sovereignty as well as those who uphold British authority and will make any sacrifice to ensure its continuance, wag their heads and say that the New-Delhi was foredoomed to go the way of all Delhis that were ever built."

The story of the little flower can be disregarded but there were enough misfortunes to support the belief in evil omens.

On November 21, 1911, the *Beachey*, a steamer chartered by the P. & O stranded on Minicoy with nearly 6000 tons of goods ordered for the Durbar. The importers suffered considerable loss by this accident, but hoped to receive the insurance. Even that consolation failed, for ten months later the *Beachey* steamed up the Hooghly with a full cargo, not the least valuable being unsaleable through arriving too late.

The second disaster occurred on December 3 when the beautiful reception and dining tents of the Punjab Government were destroyed by fire.

Two days later—on December 5, the Royal Pavilion in which the Princes of India were to receive His Majesty the King-Emperor was burnt out and several exalted persons nearly lost their lives. Priceless silk shawls and carpets, the massive and exquisitely carved silver pillars and magnificent furniture were destroyed.

To allay superstition Sir George Birdwood, an old official, thought it fitting to write to the *Times* explaining that orthodox Hindus consider the fires as omens of good luck, but whatever Sir George said, the people at the Durbar felt nothing but forebodings as the ill omens increased.

The fourth happening came as if to prepare the public for what was coming. An earthquake rocked Calcutta at 8-55 p.m. on December 7, the day before the King and Queen reached Delhi, less than a week before Calcutta was dethroned

from her proud position of Capital of India. That really set busy tongues going.

If a coincidence is an omen the fifth happened on December 13, 1911, the day after the Durbar opened. The P. & O. S.S. *Delhi* outward bound with £300,000 in gold on board stranded almost opposite Gibraltar on Cape Spartel. The British fleet was in Gibraltar at the time, but a merchant ship was of little concern to the Navy (things have changed since then) until the news came that the Duke and Duchess of Fife were on board the unlucky P. & O. and had to be rescued. Then came an almighty rush. With the good old nautical slapdash the Duke and Duchess were hurried into a boat commanded by a rear or vice-admiral. No other passengers were permitted to accompany them—Royalty had first claim but, by some mischance the boat capsized.

The irony of the accident was that the unfortunate Duke caught cold from the wetting, developed pneumonia and died. The passengers who remained on board suffered little inconvenience; no other life was lost. The *Delhi* became a total loss and I came across some of her cabin furniture in various parts of Morocco.

After that the omens began to grow more and more sinister. It was soon rumoured abroad that the two foundation stones of the new city were picked up in such indecent haste that they had to be taken from a Delhi undertaker's yard. People told one another that one of the stones had been already booked for a tombstone for a recently deceased local resident. After all, what

did that matter? Delhi was all tombs for fifty miles round and a couple more made no difference. The thing was to get on with the job. The element of evil was overlooked in the determination to fix everything beyond recall, so the inscription was chiselled out and the block re-dressed at a few hours' notice. What sort of good fortune can be expected when the framers of the plot thought so little of appearances that they led Their Majesties to declare an almost secondhand tombstone to be one of the foundation stones of a new and expensive city? The *Indian Daily News*, commenting on this, said—"A Capital City founded on a tombstone which was removed within a month, seems rather a weird episode. Those who have read their *Bagh-o-Bahar* no doubt would say—"Ai Kambukht!" (Alas! unlucky one!)

The seventh was more than an ill-omen. It was discovered that the land purchased for New Delhi was, during the rainy season a huge jheel of 150 square miles. That meant scrapping 115,000 acres of land, which, bought in haste, had to be got rid of for a song.

The foundation stones which had been laid by their Majesties could not be found after the rains of 1912 until a gang of coolies had spent a week prodding for them. When they were found, one day or night, the secondhand tombstone with its companion were set up in a place miles away from their original location, and well and truly laid again (and again) by a subordinate of the Public Works Department.

The next tragedy connected with the transfer

of the Capital took place on January 13, 1912 (Two unlucky groups of figures): Sir John Jenkins, who had been knighted the day before the Durbar for the manner in which he had framed the Bill transferring the Capital to Delhi, died at Calcutta with tragic suddenness from hæmorrhage of the brain. It was said that blunt criticism had so upset him, it brought on his untimely death.

If scoffers brush aside the preceding eight what have they to say about the ninth ill-omen?

A few days after the death of Sir John Jenkins, the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, for the last time during his term of office was driving out of Calcutta. Just as he started, a flash of lightning, unusual for the time of year, struck the flagstaff of Government House. The flag was torn and pieces of the flagstaff were hurled into his carriage.

For some time officials, well aware of the superstitious mentality of the population, tried to keep the matter of the torn flag a secret, but they eventually admitted the flag was torn and the staff broken and that it certainly was a grave ill-omen.

On December 23, 1912, Lord and Lady Hardinge came to Delhi to proceed in great state through the city. Arriving at 11 a.m. they found fifty gaily caparisoned elephants drawn up to receive them. They mounted Matu Gaj, a large tusker belonging to the Faridkote State and while proceeding through Chandni Chowk a bomb was thrown which exploded and killed the *chopdar* who was holding the scarlet and gold State

Umbrella over their Excellencies.\* The Viceroy was wounded, by numbers of gramophone needles with which the bomb was loaded, and several of the crowd were killed and injured. Although rewards aggregating Rs. 60,000 were offered for the arrest of the criminal the money was never claimed. \*Indian mentality leans more towards shielding than apprehending malefactors, and convictions are generally obtained by giving the prosecution the benefit of the doubt.

In September 1920 the London *Daily Mail* tripped over itself by accidentally stating an unconscious truth. In commenting upon the appointment of Lord Hardinge, as British Ambassador in Paris, the paper said:—

“From 1910 to 1916 he was Viceroy of India, governing the dependency through very difficult years and enjoying general esteem as was made clear in 1912 when an attempt was made to assassinate him in Delhi.” One cannot but feel that might have been put differently.

There is still more to follow. Someone had a brainwave which led to asking King George to lay a foundation stone for a monument to the memory of his father, King Edward VII.

That was also rushed through. During the ceremony His Majesty expressed himself proud to know that on that spot a memorial to his beloved father's memory would stand firm for ever. But if a King can do no wrong he can obviously lay a foundation stone in the wrong place. The arrangements were *kutcha*, for it was discovered that 27 feet of rubbish had to be cleared before solid ground was reached. That foundation



stone was moved and re-laid more than once before it was found that an ordinary equestrian statue did not fit in with the architectural design of "Raisina" (that and "Imperial Delhi" being the original titles of the new Capital). So horse and man came down again, taken for a ride of 900 miles, and bumped off at Calcutta where it found a resting place in the grounds of the Victoria Memorial.

To complete the sequence of evil the statue was struck by lightning. Large chunks of the marble pedestal weighing hundredweights lay around the monument for many months. As nothing could be spared from the scores of millions spent at Delhi there was a long wrangle as to who should bear the cost of repairs (Rs. 10,000), a dispute that took a couple of years to settle.

Moving statues in New Delhi seems to have become a habit or a vice. In 1940, with a bigger war on, the statues of Hardinge, "Granny" Chelmsford, (his nickname in the Dorset Territorials) Willingdon (one of the very best) Reading, and Irwin the praying mantis were all being moved. New Delhi has to be beautified if only with crow perches.

Then came the Great War. British and Indian troops were rushed to Mesopotamia. One would have thought that such a demand would have led patriotic people to suspend work on the new Capital which at any rate was of little importance. But so keen were the promoters, that disregarding the life and death struggle in which Great Britain was engaged, every possible effort was made to get on with New Delhi.

Stories were told of thousands of men going to war with not enough medical requirements to provide a bandage. In the winter hundreds went on active service without greatcoats. The official report on the Mesopotamian scandal makes dreadful reading. Sir William Meyer, (said to be a Baptist by persuasion) then Financial Member of the Viceroy's Council boasted that he had saved Rs. 100,000 on the peace estimates during the first year of that expedition. And soldiers, British and Indian, suffered worse hardships than did Napoleon's troops in Russia during the 1812 debacle.

Then there was the tragedy of Sir Beauchamp Duff, Commander-in-Chief who broke his heart over Mesopotamia.

Kipling, a stout patriot, wrote some pungent verses which did not attract the publicity in India they deserved.

"They shall not return to us, the resolute, the  
young.

The brave and whole-hearted whom we

gave:

But the men who left them thriftly to die in their  
own dung,

Shall they come with years and honour to  
the grave?

They shall not return to us, the strong men  
coldly slain

In sight of help denied from day to day:

But the men who edged their agonies and chid  
them in their pain

Are they too strong and wise to put away?



working up to a high standard, and deserve all they have gained.

During and after the last Great War profiteering led to the accumulation of fortunes bigger than the world previously knew. One Calcutta merchant was reputed to have got away with £45 millions; the disastrous effect of that made others greedy. Those who, twenty years before, would have counted themselves rich with £40,000, strove to get half a million; honesty went by the board and it is by no means certain that any of it has come back. There are for too many financial *Goondas* in Calcutta lowering British prestige who will be suitably dealt with before this war is over.

The result was that those with money could disregard consideration for others. Ordinary folk working for a living could not get Home to see their children after many years' absence. Others who wished to return had to bribe to secure passages. I know that is true for I did it myself. I had to. *The Statesman* had much to write about in this connection as the following comments, which appeared on February 22, 1922 will show:—

"People who grumble at Calcutta prices, hotel and otherwise, should try Delhi. That is the moral of a letter published in *The Statesman* yesterday morning. Rs. 400 a day for two people does seem rather a lot even to enjoy the amenities of the spot which Lord Hardinge and his backers pronounced to be 'ideal.' On the other hand, one's sympathy for the victims is slightly discounted by the fact that they are

described as being "a young married couple wintering in India." This surely means that they belong to that noble band of wealthy homesters who have managed somehow to get passages to India while many whose business lies in this country have been delayed.

"If young married couples are sufficiently influential to obtain passages to enable them to winter in India, they have a good deal less occasion to grumble at the ways of the profiteer than if they had any business to be here. The hotel-keeper who proposed to charge them to the tune of Rs. 400 a day may not have been uninfluenced by these considerations. It must have been a bit of a shock, though."

That brings to mind another story about Delhi which tends to show that brevity may be economical but abbreviation can be misleading.

An American came to Bombay on business, bringing his two daughters who went about sight-seeing and buying curios. He remained in Bombay. After various expensive tours the girls fetched up at Delhi and stayed in Maiden's hotel. Their first bill gave them a shock. Unable to meet it they wired to father—"All Money Spent. Can Stay Maidens No Longer."

"There is the baseless assumption on the part of British people of a knowledge of Hindustani and there is the affectation, common to most Indian servants of complete ignorance of English. The few who know English well often make capital out of it but there are many who understand all that is said even if they cannot read and write. If tackled they generally deny

knowledge of English as many Sahibs dislike being surrounded by bearers and khitmagars who understand what is said at meals—that would be, in their eyes, like domesticating the recording angel.

A story is told of a rather celebrated man, a notorious raconteur who went to the Maharajah of Kashmir to see if that nobleman would subscribe a few lakhs to some scheme in New Delhi.

He, with others of the party were sumptuously entertained; at dinner, with lashings of dry champagne the raconteur let himself go all out. The following morning he interviewed the Maharajah who asked, "Have you ever done any work in Windsor Castle?" The reply was in the negative. "Or in Buckingham Palace?" "No, 'was the reply', but why do you ask?"

"Well," said the Maharajah, "I thought you might have worked on the latrines there."

The simpleton didn't know that most of the servants waiting upon them were educated men, actually spies, with perfect knowledge of English. They naturally reported to the Maharajah what was said at the table by the guests. But what a jar!

## CALCUTTA BOARDING HOUSES

Some years ago a contributor to one of the Calcutta papers told the story of Mrs. Box who, he said, introduced the boarding house system to Calcutta. Advertisements in the early papers seem to traverse that claim. One that appeared in the *Calcutta Journal* on July 31 1818 is interesting. It was headed:

### LODGINGS WANTED

"A gentleman wishes to be accommodated with unfurnished lodgings in an airy upper-roomed house. *N.B.* The apartment must have glass windows."

Another, in *The Englishman and Military Chronicle* dated Saturday 14 April 1860 advertised "Boarding House No. 4 Chowringhee. Two rooms facing the Plain."

Mrs. Box appeared in 1867 and for thirty years she appealed to the snobocracy latent in the Anglo-Indian by opening boarding houses in Camac Street. That reminds one of the lines,

Sir Richard Camac, Sir Richard Camac,

His name spells the same

Both forwards and back.

Mrs. Box catered for "Gazetted Officers only, with their Families." She gave good food, treated servants decently which made them civil, and her places were scrupulously clean. In a couple

of years Mrs. Box had another house in Middleton Row. Finally she had eight houses, all more or less in the same vicinity. To one of them, more select than the others, came Secretaries to Government and their wives, and even at last Members of Council and the General Officers from Army Head Quarters.

But her triumph did not end with "Gazetted Officers only." Many Calcutta people, in their own way quite as big beetles as the biggest Government officials, betrayed a desire to enter the Box boarding establishments, and the good lady saw that she was throwing away money by restricting entrance to officials. So she changed "Gazetted Officers Only" to "On the Government House list." The circle was widened, but the appeal to convenience plus snobbery remained. The result was another rush, mostly burra sahibs and their wives. Mrs. Box's charges also increased. But even when people were paying handsomely for suites of rooms in these establishments, they were still paying less than they would have had to, had they kept houses of their own.

But everybody in Calcutta did not approve of the change that was taking place in the social life of the city. Naturally there were fewer dinner parties and private dances, and nasty paragraphs appeared in some of the papers about the decay of Anglo-Indian hospitality and the dulness of the Indian capital. But little did Mrs. Box care. She was a cheerful little dame and she made her boarders comfortable. What finally shook her was competition. Other people



started boarding houses on the same lines. Prices began to drop so Mrs. Box sold out and went Home.

Up to the advent of the motor car there was a collection of Indian huts at the eastern corner of Camac Street and Theatre Road, where ticca phaeton gharries were stabled. An old Mahomedan with a long "white flown beard" and a cheerful smile used to sit outside on a charpoy smoking a hookah. He had been khansamah to Mrs. Box and made enough to buy one or two European houses, while he ran his stables for the sake of something to do. The horses were well fed; harness good, with plenty of bright brass about it; gharries were the best in Calcutta. They did not hang about on the stands but seemed to be either permanently engaged or resting in the stable. The old man was much respected both by Indians and Europeans in the neighbourhood.

In the 'seventies Mrs. Annie Monk, the widow of a soldier, came to Calcutta to earn her living and started working as a midwife. Taking in lodgers led her eventually to rent and furnish Nos. 13, 14 & 15 in Chowringhee which were well patronised being properly run with the advantage of being nearer the business quarter. A suitable room cost 150/- a month which was about as much as men on 200/- could afford.

A fifteen stone Irishwoman she had the Irish capacity for business. (Many a Scot has become insolvent through labouring under the idea that the Irish have no business sense). Mrs. Monk's was peculiarly developed. Her practice was to approach small suppliers with the offer of all her

orders provided that rates were specially favorable. These bills would then be allowed to run on for a year, sometimes much longer; then, when matters came to a pass, she would call, dispute, argue, pull a poor mouth and blarney to get them reduced. Having done that she would make a smaller offer to be done with it, making money with both hands. But she was full of kindness to those in sickness and misfortune while experienced in the ways of those who consider they do not do themselves justice if they fail to try to live for nothing.

One lodger, a little barrister, managed to get the best side of her for five thousand rupees. He afterwards achieved some popularity on the staff of a London illustrated paper and I was interested to read, quite casually, one of his contributions in which he said "the two hardest things in the world are the diamond and a Calcutta board-house keeper's heart." With him, gratitude was a lively sense of favors to come.

It was on her boarding houses that Stephen founded the Grand Hotel. When near the close of a long life she married Danby, then manager of the Planters' Stores to whom she rather unjustly left most of her money. He, though much younger, was well on in years and had more than he knew how to spend.

No Calcutta business woman was more popular than Annie Monk and when she retired many scores of men regretted the change to the Grand Hotel.

Mrs. Walters at 6 Russell Street was successful for a time, taking two or three houses, but left

too much to the servants. The New Market holds the success of boarding houses as well as hotels. One of the big Calcutta places employed an expert who had been in the trade from washing plates in the scullery to scrounging for *bacsheesh* in the dining room but he had never really stayed in a hotel. He was sacked and the first month Rs. 4000 was saved in potatoes alone. He charged exactly four times more than he paid.

The Hilliers in Middleton Street ran a select place and did well as the old man, when long past fourscore, went to the market every day.

There were decent boarding houses in Dacres Lane where those who never owned a cheque book could stay in moderate comfort for Rs. 70/- per month and today there are quite pleasant places in Kyd Street. It was when unfortunates had to step below them they found things out.

A journalist travelling for experience round the world with his Russian wife found "India a sad country in 1925, especially if you arrive in the rainy season. In parts of China there is a rainy season too, but it does not depress the Chinese."..... "As we passed over the bridge from Howrah Station to the street beyond—two souls with but the single thought of finding some place of refuge from the cruel loneliness of the streets. Brave adventurers the pair of us."..... "Thus, alone and unbefriended, we came to the Street of Dhurumtollah where, I imagine, many another poor fish has been stranded, and entered the House of Gloom in that Street of Dhurumtollah. I hesitate to describe the discomforts of

that place. We condoned the appearance of the house—which certainly was not prepossessing—on account of the widowed landlady, who seemed a motherly old soul, and so we persuaded ourselves into believing that the place was better than it looked. At the same time I do not think I should ever have had the courage to stay there alone. We searched the newspapers vainly for cheaper lodgings, so, in desperation my wife decided upon staying here.

"Later in the day we discovered our mistake. The watery soup tasted like the offscourings of a gum pot, the beef was tough and of a curious colour, the pudding just a stodgy mess. When our hostess, attired in a black dress, took up a loaf of bread and, pressing it against her capacious bosom, proceeded to cut it, I saw Sonia frown. Then the body of a dead fly impaled on a dirty fork put her right off eating."

"Had poor Sonia seen the dilapidated deck-chairs which were not considered worth cleaning, but were good enough for lodgers, the swarms of flies and cockroaches in the kitchen, the underpaid bawarchi, dripping with sweat while chopping up buffalo meat on the floor to be turned into minced chicken, she would have been put off food for weeks."

.. We know those cheap boarding houses where the only safe dish to eat is curry, and that isn't saying a lot. Where the butter comes from must be a secret and if one can get over the repulsive taste it acts as a violent purgative. And we know those widows, who pay nobody if they can avoid it, the sort whose husbands pray to be buried at

sea so as to be as far away from their matrimonial hair shirt as ingenuity can devise.

Men have reported experiences in these places where lodgers are assured that "The prawns are quite allright. The heads may stink but you needn't eat them," and the subsequent symptoms are always laid down to a chill on the stomach.

A clever bit of angling secured for the dusky landlady's daughter "one European gentleman, blue eye got it." He invited some friends to the wedding. They found the homemade wedding cake had been made with goose fat redolent of sage and onions, while an epicure among the guests remarked, as he sipped the wine: "I see you've taken the pickles out."

The Eurasian boarding house keeper who puts on her best apparel, her ironmongery and precious stones to obtain furniture on the (prolonged) hire-purchase system is a different figure from the shapeless mountain of blubber you see squatting on a *mora* on the back verandah selling old newspapers and empty bottles to a *bickriwallah*. To understand how she lives you should sit down to one of her meals of curry made with fat a cook has skimmed off the soup and kept for a week in a dirty cigarette tin before selling it to the (3rd class) butter merchant in the bazaar. You should watch her ways with the lodger's servants, making each one do a bit of her work for nothing and the crafty way she tries to turn the master's mind against the servant if he refuses to do as she bids. Having secured his dismissal she lets the other servants know that

if they don't toe the line they won't be long there.

If a friend calls they spend the evening relating how they knocked two annas off the pin-wallas' bill, or how a morning passed happily because they saved a farthing in a shop a mile farther away than their own bazaar. To be just, there are many European women afflicted with the same mentality and whose conversation dwells upon farthings saved or bilked, forgetting that they are really more contemptible than the men who work for them. The boarding house keeper has to play her hand against the world. If one room is unoccupied she loses money. And she caters for people to whom an anna is a sum worth a lot of inconvenience to save.

A story is told about a Dr. Butler, Master of Trinity College who went to an ecclesiastical conference in Scotland with his brilliant young wife and could find no rooms except in a theatrical lodging house.

"And what will the *charge* be, my good *woman*?" said the Master, who had the habit of emphasising half his words.

The woman surveyed him and his bride with suspicious scrutiny. These were certainly not mummies, and she observed great disparity of age—in this case thirty-four years.

"Five shillings if ye're married," she declared, "or seven and sixpence if ye're living in sin."

• Well, as the monkey put it, public morals must be attended to.

Another story about a Bishop and a boarding house where there was a bright and pretty

chambermaid was, I believe, told by the very reverend gentleman himself. Before vacating his room he played a practical joke on the girl, by wrapping the poker in paper and putting it in her bed, well down towards the foot.

It was many moons before the Bishop returned when he was greeted by the girl with, "Your reverence, how clever you are! Do you know we never found that poker, for a whole year."

"Ha!" said he, and full of thought, he passed by on the other side.

"Our life is but a winter's day;  
Some only breakfast and away;  
Others to dinner stay and are full fed;  
The oldest man but sups and goes to bed.  
Largest his debt that lingers out the day:  
He that goes soonest has the least to pay."

*A. E. Maffen.*

## CLUBS\*

The difference between a "Society" and a "Club" is defined in Webster's Dictionary as— "A Society consists of a number of persons associating for any temporary or permanent object; an association for joint usefulness, pleasure or profit, AS a missionary society," which looks as if Webster had rather more than a touch of humour.

The first club in England of which we have any account was that famous one which met at the Mermaid Tavern, of which Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Beaumont, Fletcher, Raleigh and others, were members. It was not until the early 1700's that clubs, literary, political, and otherwise, became a great institution.

There may have been clubs in India earlier than those in Calcutta but details have not been discovered. From what has been gathered it looks as if the first club in Calcutta specialised in gambling, as those were the days when men played for high stakes.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, William Johnson wrote to his mother in England — "We have taken up our residence in Calcutta in a house where a Club called Selby's was once kept, notorious to all gamblers and will never be forgotten by poor John Mackenzie."

\*This formed the subject of a paper read by me at the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, in 1942 —H. H.



William Hickey refers to a Catch Club, formed by musical seceders from the Harmonic, who dolled up in thunder and forked-lightning costumes, but barred ladies, to their great discontent. Limited to 25 members, whose favourite tippie was burnt champagne there was always a waiting list of fifty.

James Augustus Hicky, a believer in blunt truth and a fiery Irishman, therefore all vindictiveness, was always in trouble as in those days it was not considered a duty to praise the Irish in the hope of appeasing the unappeasable. His journalism makes good reading to-day.

Someone said the world is an oyster from which you may get a pearl, ptomaine poisoning, or peritonitis: that never troubled Hicky's contemporaries nor did they bother about the "R" in the month when they could get hold of an oyster; stout fellows, they went all out to show their manliness, as can be seen from the *Bengal Gazette* of January 6, 1781.

"NEWS EXTRAORDINARY FROM THE  
GUZZLING CLUB."

"A few days since some Gentlemen met to eat Oysters at the New Tavern for a wager of 100 Gold Mohurs. (Rs. 1600 @ 2/8d). One of the Gentlemen, after swallowing 216 (and not of the smallest) became speechless, through a total stoppage of the circulation.

"A Surgeon was sent for, who endeavoured to *bleed* him but in vain. Blisters were applied behind the Gentleman's ears and every excitement to STERNUTATION apply'd but nothing

succeeded, till a clyster of strong Chilli Vinegar made moderately *warm* was happily introduced by Dr. Killcranny. This speedily revived the patient. And he is so well recovered as to be likely very soon to repeat the EXPERIMENT.

"We insert the above account as a useful RECIPE to those who are afflict'd in the same manner by GORG'ING at this convivial Season."

In the old days in India there were mutton clubs, cheese clubs, ice clubs, bread clubs, and draught beer clubs. Some of these are still carrying on. They enable members to enjoy what might otherwise be too expensive and troublesome to obtain.

The Mutton Club generally consisted of 5 members or a multiple of five. Sheep were kept and when one was killed, it was divided into five portions. Each member got each piece in rotation. The Club's member who managed it had a deal of trouble, but it was child's play compared to the Ice Club.

If near enough to a big city an Ice Club could generally obtain ice at about a rupee for 20 pounds. An empty ice chest had to be sent in, often quite a long journey and the minimum quantity sold to one member would be 10 pounds.

When more was wanted trouble began. Allowance had to be made for wastage on the way; anything over 20%. Servants would take their portion, loitered on their way back, and complaints came in about short quantity. The only way for an Ice Club's Secretary to settle grumblers was to threaten to resign.

In emulation of the London Beefsteak Club

one existed in Calcutta for nearly fifty years. It languished for a time, was revived in 1827 and gradually faded out.

The Beefsteak Club in London was select beyond words. Membership was limited to 24 and to increase that number by one a special resolution was passed in 1785 to permit of the election of the Prince of Wales. The Club's emblem was a gridiron. Glass, crockery, cutlery, and even the rings worn by the members all bore the same emblem.

Every Saturday at 5 p.m. each member sat down to a four-pound beef steak. If their opposite numbers in Calcutta emulated that feat their days could not have been long in the land where misfortune had led them but one can believe they were good tryers.

While on the subject of beefsteaks it may be worth mentioning that old-time missionaries, breathing the fire and the sword of the Lord and Gideon, always made their few converts eat a beefsteak to complete their severance from Hinduism. As most Hindus are vegetarians, occasionally eating fish or mutton, the beefsteak must have been a terrible trial to those who had to swallow it. The ancient habits of Oriental people, formed through thousands of generations of toleration, deserved something better than the coarse handling of such bigots who, did they but know it, were more destitute of civilised ways than those they set out to improve. Unfortunately, some of that class still make a living with collection boxes. One can be sure they never suffer from housemaid's knee.

An American writer was of opinion that Calcutta was a city of clubs and cows, but the cows are bulls. Sir E. Denison Ross, an Orientalist, used to declare that while in Calcutta half his pay went into clubs. He was a curious replica in appearance of the great Napoleon, and, at a farewell banquet, his final toast was—"Here's to India, the land of humbugs." Well —

The history of the Bengal Club seems to have been a stumbling block to several Calcutta historians. Archdeacon Walter Kelly Firminger differed from Sir Evan Cotton, so it will be safest to quote from what appeared at the time in a local journal.

One fact that appears to have escaped notice is that there was an earlier Bengal Club, for in Seton Karr's *Selections from Calcutta Gazettes*, Vol. 2, we read:—

"On Thursday, the 22nd May 1795 "A most elegant Ball was given to Mr. (Warren) Hastings by the Bengal Club at the Crown and Anchor under a general court of proprietors which was to be held on the 29th to take into consideration his long services."

There was also a Bengal Club in London twenty years before then as the following extract will show:—

• "London haunts associated with Indians were the Jerusalem Coffee House and the Crown and Anchor Tavern. At the Crown and Anchor too, met the Bengal Club once a fortnight for six months in the year, when friendships formed during many years together abroad were re-kindled."

In both places it may be assumed that curry was one of the special Club features; it became a popular dish in London as early as 1774 and according to the *Morning Herald* of May 4, 1784:—

“It renders the stomach active in Digestion—the Blood naturally free in Circulation, the mind vigorous, and contributes most of any food to the increase of the Human race.”

Edward Spencer, (*Nathaniel Gubbins* of the defunct *Pink 'Un*) was pungent in his book—*Cakes and Ale*, on the subject of curry in London. “The far-seeing eating-house keeper bags a lascar or a mehter, gives him his board, a pound a month, and a clean puggaree and kummerbund daily, and stars him as an “Indian chef, fresh from the Chowringhee Club, Calcutta.”

“Part of the duties of this Oriental is to hand round the portions of curry which he may or may not have concocted, to the appreciative guests, who enjoy the repast all the more from having the scent of the Ganges wafted across the foot-lights. The fact that even Indians cannot well be cook and waiter escapes them.

When a subaltern in India, Spencer was served in the Mess with a “Parsee curry, made by the eminent firm of Jehangir & Co. .... It was a curry. I tasted it for a week. I never felt more like murder after that curry, and the strangling of the entire firm of Jehangir would, in our cantonments, have brought in nothing more than a verdict of justifiable homicide.”

Bombay Duck attracted his notice. He

didn't object to postponed meetings but he had little partiality for fish that had been postponed after two adjournments. "I have yet to learn that it is a good thing to put a decayed denizen of the ocean in the human stomach."

One recalls something about a lonely up-country station where an exalted official who liked prawn curry was surprised and delighted to find it on the table three days running. Then the supply ceased. Asking the reason, the khan-samah said that an alligator had taken away the body of his mother-in-law and the prawns went with it.

Where Calcutta historians differed was in regard to the early location of the Bengal Club. Apparently it was first housed in Esplanade East, in a building of considerable size but without a bathroom. As can be seen, there was little regard shown for strangers when the scheme was first discussed.

*The Calcutta Monthly Journal* for February, 1827, stated:—

A meeting will be held at the Town Hall this morning, for the purpose of determining upon the formation of the United Services Club, upon a comprehensive and liberal scale. We have already published the arrangements contemplated by this association, and corrected the misapprehension that had gone abroad with respect to the period of which the Members of the different Services should be considered eligible. There is no difference in this respect, nor was it ever intended to make any. Should the Club succeed, we think it will add materially to the resources

of society in Calcutta, and contribute still more to the comforts of occasional visitors from the Mofussil. As the latter object, however, involves a considerable outlay, and will demand, therefore, an extent of support which, we do not think it will in the first instance receive, we should think it might be worth while to start on a reduced plan, limiting admission to residents in Calcutta, and excluding that part of the project intended to provide for the convenience of visitors."

The last passage gives one some idea of old-time hospitality. To care for the local man and disregard the man most in need of a place to lay his head strikes a queer note. But hospitality was rare in India, or they would never have written so much about it.

"A Club-house may be rented," said the *Calcutta Monthly Journal*, "and such measures adopted as shall not require anything beyond periodical expenditure, and after this has been effected, it may be considered how far the more complete developement (*sic*) of the plan is practicable. We suggest this modification only under an idea, that it may be found, at present, difficult to compass the scheme in all its details, and that as much of it as is practicable may be abandoned, because the whole cannot be accomplished in forgetfulness of the maxim, that small beginnings lead to greater things."

The Club was formed; His Excellency Lord Combermere was requested by a deputation from the Club to become a patron. Membership was limited to 500, one hundred of whom could be

Gentlemen not in the Service of his Majesty or the Honorable Company.

When the United Service Club moved to No. 5 Dalhousie Square East in 1833 the name was changed to "The Bengal Club." That was its home for twelve years when a change was made to a house in Chowringhee formerly occupied by the historian Macaulay.

"Members could occupy a room for Rs. 4 weekly. Breakfast was Re. 1; Tiffin Re. 1-8; Dinner Rs. 3, Wine, etc., being charged separately about one and a half to three rupees a night. Sherry, Claret, Port Wine and Beer, being at (on?) the House."

In 1836 an attempt was made to reduce the existing entrance fee from Rs. 250 to Rs. 150. The higher rate was, however, retained, but it was permissible to pay by instalments of Rs. 50 per month. In 1840 however, the entrance fee was Rs. 200.

On January 30, 1907, the Club premises at 33 Chowringhee and No. 1-1 Russell Street were bought from Mr. J. E. D. Ezra for 5½ lakhs and Vincent Esch, a clever architect designed the present building which is certainly an ornament to the city. The new premises were occupied on Sunday, October 24, 1911.

• A notable member of the Bengal Club was Joachim Hayward Stocqueler who, after leaving the army, acquired the paper *John Bull* for something less than Rs. 18,000. He changed the name to *The Englishman* and years later sold it for £14,000.

Highly capable, his independent views made



him suspect' to *John Bull's* subscribers many of whom deserted the paper but a lucky shot in starting the *Bengal Sporting Magazine* brought most of them back because the editor was a sportsman.

A clever, well educated man who had served in the ranks long enough to gauge the ineptitude and snobbish conceit which pervaded officialdom in India, he used the columns of his paper to attack various officers, who, naturally didn't like it.

Stocqueler was called upon to discuss the management of the (Kidderpore) military orphan school. "They had curtailed the food of the children, giving them such slender stuff as *dhal-bhat* (rice and split peas) instead of meat. One of the committee, a very spare man, a captain on the staff, declared that he often ate *dhal-bhat* himself (no doubt he did as an accompaniment to fish or curry), and found it very good. *The Englishman* remarked that it was very evident from his lean appearance, that he was satisfied with innutritious fare; but he surely could not deem it suitable to the growing daughters of his brother-officers. Colonel Hawkins, of the Commissariat, was sent by the infuriated staff captain to demand a retraction of the remark, an apology, or, 'the satisfaction due to a gentleman.' I was not going to stultify myself by resenting an inference on the captain's obviously attenuated *personnel*. So two boats were hired, and the combatants crossed the river Hooghly—it might have been the Styx for one of us—on the same evening, and we exchanged the usual civilities. The

captain's bullet lodged in the ground. Mine, more ambitious ascended into the ambient void. In fact, I aimed at the new moon; for, though the wrath of my adversary was only half appeased by his drilling a hole in my body, I had no revenge to gratify. The good little man made me a graceful bow; he was quite satisfied—so was I—and we were always better friends afterwards."

In a footnote Stocqueler said—"the little affair created a mighty sensation at the time; an old cavalry general wrote a letter replete with praise, and some of the *alumni* of the orphan school, men of mature age, offered to present me with a piece of plate as a memorial of their gratitude and my—gallantry." Which shows that all were not unkind to children even in those days.

Stocqueler later attacked the Adjutant-General, Colonel Lumley. "With an amazing disregard for the proprieties both sides rushed into print and for many months the Press was filled with comments on the schism that was bringing the (Bengal) Club near dissolution. In military circles Stocqueler obtained considerable support but he was not on too good terms with other members, Judges of the High Court, as he said one was known as "Stupid Bob" while another was "Booby Mac" and the third, evidently a bit of a fireater—was "Jemmy Blazes."

The quarrel with Lumley went on for months and a lot of dirty linen which should have been washed at home appeared in the press. Several members resigned in disgust and a pro-

posals which 'was put forward at a general Meeting to dissolve the Club was withdrawn by Stocqueler resigning his membership.

The Calcutta papers in 1926 exhausted, in a review, most of the history of the Bengal Club which was about to celebrate its centenary. With a desire for knowledge I wrote a polite letter to the Secretary asking if I might be permitted to buy or borrow a copy of the book but my request was curtly refused. 'Unfortunately for England and India there are still far too many like him. It was disappointing to find no references to the case against a man we will call Craft, who, sometime in the 1890's was convicted and imprisoned for running an illicit still.

At the time interest was not decreased when Excise officials stated that one of Craft's best customers was the Bengal Club, to whom he supplied a special brand of whisky reminiscent of banks and braes which was a source of pride to epicurean Scots as they had a special exclusive right to buy it.

Legal proceedings elicited the fact that the particular flavour and aroma were obtained from country tobacco soaked in water from a slimy Entally tank. It is rather a pity that in 1926 the sense of humour was so atrophied that when historic details were published, this titbit was omitted. A writer with a quizzical turn of mind would have been able to dwell upon this confidence trick on the discriminating palates of the most select Club in India with attractive effect.

A Frenchman, whilst *chef* at the Reform Club, turned out salads which were such master

pieces, such things of beauty, that one of the members questioned him on the subject.

"How do you manage to introduce such a delicious flavour into your salads?"

"Ah! that should be my secret, but I will tell him to you. After I have made all my preparations, and the green food is mixed with the dressing, I chew a little clove of garlic between my teeth—so—and then breathe gentle over the whole." That sounds all right but the member who told that story may be unaware that the facts are otherwise.

There is this to be said. Appetite is the most intricate feature of a human being's make-up. One man may like onions while his twin brother detests them. That Craft's whisky found high favour among the most select men of Calcutta means little more than that, like acorns, it needed a cultivated taste.

Even in music tastes differ; members of a Calcutta Club which revels in the amenities of a dance band were dissatisfied with the one they had so a sub-committee was formed to see about it. Other bands were tested. The conductor of one never left off talking about his trial. After his musicians had played some of their special arrangements in the dashing way unmarried men would best do it, the spokesman of the sub-committee pronounced judgment.

"Quite a good band. The men play very well indeed. But the saxophones are far too small. Can't you let us have something bigger?"

They were no worse than the Sergeant Major in Fort William, who, when told that "the band

is playing *The Arcadians* this afternoon" came out with "I hope they beat 'em".

Ordinary people in India could hardly be expected to know much about wind and water tubes like saxophones. The musical critic of one of our Bengali papers might have been brought in, for he wrote up a charity concert and was of opinion that the promoters "were looking for instruments that would let off large and small Scotch music."

According to Lowell Thomas, "Calcutta is reputed to be one of the most 'cliquey' places in India.....They dislike the society of foreigners, adventurers, upstarts and natives. You must convince Calcutta that you don't belong to any of these undesirable classes (unless very eminent in them, of course)" (he is too generous there) "before you can cross the threshold of the Bengal Club even as a guest."

He considered the Bengal Club to be one of the best in the world.

"Boxwallah" in *An Eastern Backwater* was of opinion that "India is the happy hunting ground of the middle classes who at home are not greatly troubled with questions of social standing." When they find themselves in Indian Club circles, the lift-up has an intoxicating effect on weak heads. As Mrs Hannah More put it:

"In men this blunder you will find—

All think their little set mankind."

At the North corner of Kyd Street and Chowringhee stands the United Service Club, a handsome modern structure built on the "skew whiff" with Chowringhee to catch the south breeze.

Originally founded in 1845 as the Bengal Military Club, the name was changed on March 15, 1853, to the Bengal United Service Club and converted into a limited liability company in 1903.

About 1860, a newcomer, elected a member of the United Service Club said it was "a very excellent institution, where considering the comforts available a bachelor can live more economically than anywhere else in Calcutta. It was formally exclusively for Military men, but they got into difficulties, while the amalgamation proved pleasant socially. The Club consists of a number of fine houses, in one of which are the public rooms, while the others are set apart for chambers for those only making a short stay. Stabling is also available. The rent of these is moderate; and I found my Club bill, eating and drinking seldom exceeded 200 rupees monthly. This was much more economical than the chum-mery." He also joined the Bengal Club where he found "there was more luxury, the whist points were higher and there was generally a more free expenditure of money than at the other and I think it was more lively. On coming back to Calcutta a dozen years afterwards I found this still to be the case."

• The reading, billiard, and other public rooms in the U. S. Club are magnificent, the only slight drawback being that the bedrooms have no attached bathrooms. There is an excellent library and I have pleasure in stating that on occasion when I have asked for the loan of a book, the pick of the library was freely granted.

The Club subscription is Rs. 20/- per annum. Calcutta members pay Rs. 14/- per month plus Rs. 2/- for library subscription.

The best book about Clubs is Samuel Shepherd's—*The Byculla Club*, as the author depicts various aspects of social life of the times. Much in the book might also have applied to Clubs in Bengal and Madras.

When Bombay determined to follow the example of Calcutta a great impetus had been given to the Club system by the founding in London of the United Services Club. Old men like the Duke of Wellington were against Clubs and Officers' Messes considering them incentive to extravagances. He carried his carelessness for other people's feelings almost to an extreme, but joined Crockford's so as to be able to black-ball the Marquis of Douro, therefore to some extent he was a club man.

The first Bombay Club was founded in London, not in Bombay as may be seen from Mr. Ralph Nevill's book on *London Clubs*. A century ago there were several institutions connected with the East in the West End of London. Such were the Calcutta Club, the Madras Club and the China Club. They were rather associations than Clubs. The Bombay Club consisted of one large newsroom and an ante-room. It opened at 10 a.m. and closed at midnight, light refreshments could be brought in by the porter. Smoking was strictly prohibited.

"The Byculla Club came into existence with the downfall of the splendid establishment of Duncan Cameron, who had taken up Boyce's

hotel, and from which every former proprietor had retired with a fortune. Cameron, however failed, but his house was the resort of the Governor and of every fashionable *eleve*, and the scene of many brilliant balls and bumpering suppers."

"By 1833 Clubs, in the generally accepted sense of the word, were non-existent in Bombay, though society had to some extent been prepared for their establishment by the Sans Souci Club and the Highland Society. The former founded in 1785 was a dining club patronised by the services and business men.....The Club met for convivial feasts in Duncan Cameron's tavern."

In the history of the Byculla Club we read that the "Soul of the Secretary in early days must have been harassed by the great ice problem," but the club played a big part in bringing it out.

Billiards is a game with a past. Shakespeare would lead us to believe that it was played in the days of Queen Cleopatra. It has been said that "fifty billiard balls of brass with pools and cues of the same material" were left by Caikire More, one of the ancient Kings of Ireland who died in A.D. 148.

Mary Queen of Scots, shortly before her execution complained to the Bishop of Glasgow that "her billiard table had been taken from her as a preliminary step to her punishment." In 1767 John Evelyn saw a billiard table at Euston Suffolk, and Charles Cotton, who about the same time published the first rules of the "most gentle, cleanly, and ingenious game" records that few



towns were without a billiard table. A recruiting party bagged thirteen billiard markers in Bath alone.

The Byculla Club had one billiard table in 1843 on which members could play in the day time, the charges being—

A rubber of 24 to the game      1 anna

A single game of 51      1 anna

A single game of 101      2 annas

A double match of 31      2 annas

Some years later a single game of 501 was Rs. 10/- by day and Rs. 20/- by night.

A note in the Club Complaint Book is quoted—"The red ball ought to be sent to the hills as its complexion is very pale."

"Smoking in the Club appears to have been permitted with certain restrictions from the earliest times. In 1842 a rule was passed prohibiting smoking in the sitting rooms between 6 and 8 p.m."

For the first ten years of the Club's existence hookahs were commonly used by members and it is presumably from those days that the custom of handing round live charcoal has survived.

"After dinner," wrote Colonel Davidson in *Memories of a Long Life*, apropos of a dinner in the Fort, the hookah-burdars slipped in, and each, having spread a handsome, narrow Persian rug behind his master's chair, prepared the chillum, blowing vigorously at the red-hot balls, and handed the chased silver mouth-pieces of the snake-like tube to his master, when a general gurgling was heard that astonished unaccustomed ears." The luxury was not so costly as some may

think, for against the hookah-buridar's wages may be set the low price of tobacco. Higgs and Briggs, of Medows Street sold the best Bengal hookah tobacco at Rs. 15 per package of 21 lbs. and the same universal providers offered Manilla cheroots at Rs. 15 per thousand.

The Club did not welcome strangers. Ralph Nevill writes that in old days strangers "were usually treated like the members' dogs—they might be left in the hall under proper restraint, but access to any other part of the house, except, perhaps some cheerless apartment kept as a strangers' dining room, was forbidden."

In 1850 a member on two occasions brought strangers into the Byculla Club and insisted on having brandy and soda-water; the Committee proposed to expel him for "so marked a determination on his part to disregard the rules of the Club" and for conduct "so unbecoming and derogatory in itself and so calculated to disturb the harmony and good order of the institution." A few weeks later they got him on something else and out he went—"his downfall being no doubt due to the evil communications of strangers."

It was not until 1854 that the introduction of guests was legalised and even then care was taken to keep out all those considered undesirable.

In 1873 objection was taken to the fact that a tailor was introduced into the Club as a guest by a member of the Bengal Club temporarily residing in the Byculla Club. He, of all supersnobs, ought to have known better but he must have been drunk.

As the Byculla Club was nearly thirty years old before the Committee in 1861 invited contributions towards the formation of a library and "of other means of recreation such as a rifle range and butt, a racket court, bowling green, swimming bath etc.," the sneers about lack of intellectuality were not ill-founded. In 1868 "it was determined to procure standard works for the library with Rs. 1,820 subscribed by members, and to invite suggestions of suitable books from members." Considering the price of books that sum would not take them very far even though members thought it ample.

Many belonging to the Byculla Club were probably in full accord with Mark Twain who said—"No library is any good if it has a book by Jane Austen in it, and any library is a good library if it has no book by Jane Austen in it even if it has no other book besides."

An American was going the round of the book collections of London; on calling to see the librarian, he was led deep down into the bowels of the earth until he found himself in a large, steamy kitchen. "But where," asked the bewildered bibliographer, "is the Librarian?" "That's 'im," was the reply, "cuttin' the jint". As Mr. F. J. Huddleston, Librarian of the War Office put it, "what (those members) needed was a Child's Guide to Knowledge." And we have our babu librarian in a hill station who catalogued—"The Bible, by God."

The Book of the World is better than the World of Books; they go well together but in the early days there was little chance for men to learn

much about anything but fortitude, and they started those lessons early.

In 1864, a member, about to return to England was asked to inquire about the introduction of "gas sunlight" into the Club dining room. In the following years the Committee arranged with the Bombay Gas Company to light the passages, kitchen and compound with gas...as the "system will be more economical than the one now in use, and there will not be the same opportunity for speculation on the part of subordinates."

All the old Clubs in India have a few of what might be termed "peculiarities." At one of them the secretary had occasion to inform a member that he had acted contrary to the traditions of the Club. The offender replied:—"When I joined this Club I was furnished with a copy of the rules. I shall be much obliged if you will now let me have a copy of the traditions."

The complaint book of the Byculla Club contained the following little gem.

"ON Friday, the 12th April (1878) *one* snipe, the last of the season, was purchased at the expense of the Club. Shortly afterwards the Hon. Secretary was observed consuming the bird. Is this the way that the members of the Club are looked to or is the Hon. Secretary to be allowed to guzzle unchecked and un-noticed." S/d.-*Several Indignant Members* from which it is evident that that snipe had a larger mind than the *Several Indignant Members*.

Before the Madras Club was founded in 1832, "the younger officers of the King's and Company's Services resorted to the Tavern of the

Exchange in 'Fort St. George.' Colonel H. D. Love, the historian, celebrated for his monumental work—*Vestiges of Old Madras*, put together a *Short Historical Notice* of the Club on November 25, 1901. He was followed in 1934 by Percy Macqueen with a *Sketch of Its History*.

Colonel Love's story is more readable as he was blessed with a sense of humour. No more than 48 pages, it is too long to quote fully, which is a pity as it gives so good an idea of the times.

He was of opinion that "no historical notice, however brief, can be deemed complete without a reference to the *Complaint Book* or *Jest Book* as it has been called. The book was brought into use under a resolution of the Committee dated December 14, 1864. The earliest preserved volume dates from October, 1865, and one of the first complaints refers to the removal of the *Old Complaint Book* which was "by far the most interesting publication in the Club."

Sir George Arthur, writing to *The Times* about Clubs says—"The Club has been rather unkindly said to appeal to the Englishman for four special reasons. The Englishman's tendency is to aloofness, and the Club enables him to keep himself to himself as much or nearly as much as he pleases. He is disposed to economy, and he flatters himself that, if he does not get something for nothing he gets it at prime cost.

There is no tipping in Clubs, but members subscribe once a year to a fund to make all the staff a present.

A present is not necessarily a tip. A man fresh to India had an appointment with an Indian

gentleman who sent his car to drive his visitor to and fro. "I feel a bit awkward about offering the driver a tip," said the stranger, "his driver speaks English better than I do." He was advised to put a couple of rupees in an envelope, thereby changing bacshaesh into a present.

The Englishman is domestic, and his Club gives him the exact *vie d'intérieur* which he so keenly appreciates; and as he is apt to indulge in grievances, the "Complaints Book" affords him a harmless vent for grumblings, which otherwise might be voiced on the domestic hearth."

A few samples from the Madras Club *Complaint Book* may be found interesting:

A cynic, one of those who cheerfully sacrifices the shadow for the substance, ventured to propose that a Spelling Book most in vogue be kept on the writing table near the complaint book for the benefit of members who wish to record their ideas.

"It is suggested that the clock in the new reading room be placed in some less elevated position, or that a telescope be placed on the table for the use of members desiring to ascertain the hour."

"Had a bottle of lemonade this evening. Contained about 12 bristles such as would come out of a hair brush. Swallowed two. It would be well not to have quantities of bristles in lemonade."

"I request that the Secretary will eat only *one* of the 'Fancy Biscuits'. He'll never eat another."

"Suggested that the Club procure more

'Claret Jugs'. This night I have been obliged to drink my claret cup brewed in a common *Chamber Ewer*."

"The Club curries are notoriously bad, and the encouragement given to the present Cooks to be careless and idle by members swallowing and paying for whatever is served up to them, effectually excludes any hope of amelioration."

Club records ought to give fairly accurate details about prices although one can be certain that the butler did quite well for himself out of the bazaar. Some things, years ago, were cheap but not so cheap as salaries. In 1846 owing to complaints about the high cost of living at the Madras Club, a Statement showed that it was possible to live there for Rs. 127-8 per month.

		Rs.	As.	P.
Cup or Tea or Coffee	...	0	2	0
Breakfast, plain	...	0	10	0
Tiffin, cold	...	0	12	0
Dinner, consisting of the joint of the hour, curry and rice and Table Charge	...	1	2	0
Bottle of Beer	...	0	8	0
Half Pint of Wine	...	0	8	0
Cold Bath	...	0	2	0
Room	...	0	8	0

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Per day, Total Rs. 4 4 0

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The meals were obviously simple; soup is not mentioned and there were no "side" dishes, so dear to Anglo-India.

Soda Water was Rs. 3/- per dozen.

Up to 1876 "the fragrant cocoanut alone was used for lighting." Petroleum was introduced in 1877 and in the course of two years it had displaced cocoanut oil in all parts of the Club.

In 1885 electric light was installed, "The Committee arranged with a Bombay firm to light the Club with 200 lamps of 20-candle power for a term of three years at Rs. 700/- per month, a rate less than that incurred for oil lighting."

Modern sanitary fittings were installed between 1928 and 1931. (Up to then the bathrooms must have been of that description advertised by a Bengali landlord in Calcutta as "commodious.")

A Cold Storage room was installed in 1927.

Somewhere in the 1880's a complaint which ran—"Both before and after dinner today I noticed several cats running about in the room just outside the dining-room. It will be impossible for Sir Frederick Roberts to use the Club at meal-time if these animals are allowed in the room as he has the greatest objection to them..... Surely a little judicious poisoning would remove the nuisance."

Another member would "suggest for the consideration of the Committee that if the cats are judiciously poisoned, we incur the risk of being overrun with rats. I desire too to enter a protest against the wholesale massacre of the cat, an animal most useful, and characterised by a cleanliness of habit which makes it the least offensive of domesticated animals."

A deal of publicity used to be given to Lord Robert's aversion to cats. Many years ago I



wrote to the London *Sunday Times* pointing out that Indians who believe in transmigration consider that dislike to be a sign that during a former existence the gallant old soldier must have been a rat, but I cannot remember if that letter was published.

Mark Twain was more than usually cynical about the doctrine of reincarnation. To me, personally, it seems that nothing in this world is wasted—the Sea of Life may be like the sea, which becomes clouds, rain, rivers and the sea again. Why shouldn't life be like the sea?

In Benares, the humorist was told that if a Hindu died on the wrong side of the Ganges there he was sure to return in the next life in the form of an ass. His comment was that he had frequently met people whom he suspected of having died on the wrong side of the Ganges. He went on—"The Hindu has a childish aversion to being changed into an ass. One could properly expect an ass to have an aversion to being turned into a Hindoo. He would lose dignity by it, also self-respect, and nine-tenths of his intelligence." Nevertheless, the man who buys an average Hindu for an ass would make a bad bargain.

One of the stories about the Madras Club is that the "Committee when the Club was first started, proud of their arrangements, invited a notable housewife, a Scotswoman, to inspect it. She did so with perfect thoroughness, and in equally complete silence. When at last she went, she opened her mouth at parting to say, "If that is the best you can do, I am sorry for you." They

then and there swore an oath that no woman should ever again cross the threshold. That oath was kept, except of course for the low-caste sweeper women who come in daily with their little bundles of palmyra frond stalks and stir up the dust, until the evening of the (1918) Armistice when the Club members raided the Annexe, carried off the ladies there like the Sabine maidens of old, hoisted them over the bar counter and made them serve drinks." *Southern India Its Political and Economic Problems* by Dr. Gilbert Slater. (1936.)

According to Percy Macqueen "The Madras Club has the largest membership of any club in Asia". In 1931, the numbers totalled 2,287. As there are fewer Europeans in Madras than in Calcutta or Bombay it looks as if snobbishness was not so rife as in the other two large Indian cities.

Sir Edward Buck's *Simla Past and Present* is a fine compilation of about a quarter of a million words. His story of the Simla United Service Club is mostly taken from the description of it by Sir William Howard Russell, one of those grand old War Correspondents who used to gallop about battle fields like a spare General. In the Crimea he gave away so much information in the columns of *The Times* that Gortchakov said he was the best spy the Russian Secret Service possessed. On the other hand it was largely due to him that the British forces did not all end in the cemeteries.

Shortly after the Mutiny, Russell was in Simla and arrived "at a large ostentatious build-

ing called the Simla Club—in truth, an hotel.” “It was,” he writes in his *Diary in India*, “nearly 5 o’clock ere my jampan was laid alongside the club-step, and I limped into a decent apartment which was ready for me. The landlord, however, told me that the club was nearly full. Many sick and wounded officers were up here.” He had not long occupied his room before an invitation came to Lord William Hay’s residence, and he says: “I was carried off jampan and all, and I must say the air of the club did not make me quit it with regret, though some subsequent acquaintance with the place induced me to modify a little my first unfavourable impression.”

Sir Edward Buck goes on—“The following description of life at the Club nearly seventy (now over 80) years ago, written by Dr. Russell when he had been about six weeks in Simla, will doubtless be read with mixed feelings by past and present members.”

“Let us go over to the Simla Club. It is nightfall, for the last moments of the day are absorbed in the canter round Jakko, the closing gallop down the Mall, billiards, the racquet-court, the library, or lounging from one shop to another. Lights are gleaming from the long row of windows in the bungalow. Syces holding horses, and jampanees sitting in groups by their masters’ chairs, are clustering round the verandah. Servants are hurrying in to wait on the sahibs, who have come to dinner from distant bungalows. The clatter of plates and dishes proclaim that dinner is nearly ready. The British officer and civilians, in every style of Anglo-Indian costume,

are propping up the walls of the sitting room, waiting for the signal to fall on. The little party in the corner have come from the card-room, and it is whispered that old Major Stager has won 700 rupees from young Cornet Griffin, since tiffin; but Griffin can never pay unless he gets his Delhi prize-money soon; and that little Shuffle, the Major's partner, who does not look twenty yet, but is well known as a cool hand, has extracted nearly twice as much from that elderly civilian, who has come up with a liver and full purse from the plains. The others are soldierless officers of ex-sepoy regiments, Queen's officers, civilians, doctors, invalids, unemployed brigadiers, convalescents from wounds or illness in the plains; and their talk is of sporting, balls, promotions, exchanges, Europe, and a little politics, rechauffed from the last *Overland Mail*; but as a general rule all serious questions are tabooed, and it is almost amusing to observe the excessive *esprit de corps* which is one of the defects of the English character, and which now breaks up the officers of the Queen's, of the Company's service, and of civilian departments into separate knots. Dinner is announced, and the members and guests file into a large room with a table well laid out with flowers and plated epergnes, round which is a double file of the club servants and of the domestics which each man has taken with him. The dinner is at all events plentiful enough, the pastry and sweets being, perhaps, the best department. Conversation is loud and animated. Among Indians the practice of drinking wine with each other has not yet

died out, and the servants are constantly running to and fro with their masters' compliments, bottles, and requests to take wine with you, which are generally given to the wrong persons, and produce much confusion and amusement."

"Cheroots follow closely on the removal of the last jelly-brandy-panee; and more wines not very infrequently succeed, while parties are formed and set to work in the inner room and the more jovial of the gentlemen proceed to the execution of vocal pieces such as were wont to be sung in Europe twenty years ago, generally enriched by fine choral effects from the combined strength of all the company. The usual abandon of such reunions in Europe is far exceeded by our Indians, who, when up at the hills, do not pretend to pay the least attention to the presence of old officers, no matter what their rank or age. The 'fun' grows louder and faster as the night advances. The brigadiers look uneasily or angrily over their cards at the disturbers, but do not interfere. There is a crash of glass, and a grand row at the end of the room, and the Bacchanalians, rising with exultation, seize 'Ginger Tubbs' in his chair, and carry him round the room as a fitting ovation for his eminent performance of the last comic ballad and settle down to 'hip-hip-hurrah, and one cheer more,' till they are eligible for bed or for a 'broiled bone' at old Brown's. *Hinc illae lachrymae.* Hence the reports of the bazaar people of the rows and scrapes that reach us in the mornings. But by midnight nearly all the guests and members have retired to their rooms or bungalows."

Which seems to show that normal club life prevailed at Simla as elsewhere.

Sir Edward tells a story of a "young official living at the Club who was not very popular with the other members, so one evening two youthful Earls, who happened to be in Simla together, offered to persuade him to leave. Their persuasion took the form of pulling him out of bed, making hay in his rooms, and placing him in a cold bath after midnight. But the subject of this joke was so flattered at being visited by two belted Earls that he told everyone on the Mall the next day—"Tremendous doings at the Club last night, good old S—— and good old R—— actually gave me a bath in the early morning." After that attempts to get rid of him were given up."

Which brings to mind a yarn about an undesirable who got into a Club and some time later he went to his proposer to report—"I say, the Committee has offered me 25 guineas to resign. What would you do about it?"

"Do," was the reply, "I shouldn't do anything. You wait another three months and they'll make it a hundred."

Mr. Algernon Bourke, long and honourably associated with White's believed that a Club need have only two rules: (1) that every member should pay his subscription and (2) that he should behave like a gentleman.

A story is told of the German Prince "Little Willie" who was given a banquet in the Simla Club.

"After dinner everyone retired to the garden

to smoke and listen to the band. Someone idly wondered the name of a particularly beautiful star, which hung like a great lamp in the heavens above us. No one noticed His Royal Highness until he answered quietly; Surely everyone knows the name of that star. It is the one my illustrious father presented, to the Lord."

There is another story about the Crown Prince which does not seem to have seen the type of day.

"Tommy" Pugh, a skilled mechanic gave up charge of a large workshop to drive Kitchener's car. As it happened he was told to drive the Prince to various frontier posts. Thinking perhaps that if papa's scheme materialised for a German Empire extending from the North Sea to the Persian Gulf, photographs of strategic points might come in useful, His Highness took numbers of photographs. Being so well brought up he couldn't be expected to carry the camera back to the car, so it was handed to Tommy Pugh who respectfully following behind opened the back of the camera to see that everything was quite all right. Lord Birdwood who was on Kitchener's staff has a lively sense of humour (so had K) must know who gave Pugh the hint about the camera.

The (Calcutta) Saturday Club was started about 1872 in a house near by the present location of the New Club. Louis (Tiger) Jackson, a civilian judge of the High Court was, if not the originating spirit, its principal supporter for many years. He was subsequently knighted. The Club's principal object was to provide small and

earlies for the elite of Society who found the assemblies too common. It became a centre for croquet, badminton, and in later years, lawn tennis, and has a very large membership.

The original idea from which the Club took its name was to give members, including ladies, opportunities of amusement, particularly on dull Saturday evenings in the hot season and rains. Every Saturday night there was a concert, dancing and other entertainments. Owing to the dissatisfaction with the primitive state of Calcutta theatres a small theatre was built in the 'Nineties.

Only one play appears to have been produced—The Private Secretary—with Sir William Garth as one of the principals. Poor Garth died a painful death a few years later, and there does not appear to have been anybody take enough interest to produce another.

The New Club, also in Calcutta, was started in 1881 (?). For a time there appears to have been a lack of response to support it, the matter being discussed during the whole of 1882, but in July, 1883, it was in full swing. This was due to the efforts of the Koi Hai Minstrels, who enlivened the dulness of Calcutta for a few years during the rainy season. The proceeds of some of the final performances were devoted to the Club, putting it on its feet. Originally located at No. 235, Lower Circular Road, it found a permanent home after one or two changes, at No. 38, Chowringhee.

For many years Coal-black Minstrel Troupes did much for the pleasure and gratification of the English-speaking races. They were even



patronised by piety-mongers who, believing that God sent no one into the world to be happy, went all out to make the world miserable. About two per cent. of the people dominated Great Britain with poisonous bigotry, Biblical distortions, and Old Testament ferocity. To them, all theatrical performances were sinful, but they chanced hell fire by patronising Minstrels with blackened faces, whom a cynic described as a company of undertakers who chanted lugubriousness in harmony with their occupation.

Bacchus, a divine being, is represented by the heathen mythology as the invention of dancing and the theatre. Plays were part of public worship, often employed in times of pestilence to appease the offended deities. But they have been zealously proscribed by the godly in later ages; and the playhouse, according to a learned divine, is the porch of hell. Like many others, they failed to understand that all actors are not necessarily rascals, but all rascals are necessarily actors.

The advent of the Christy Minstrels saw the start of enlightenment in England. How feeble-minded people were can be guessed from one of the Koi Hai Minstrel jokes. The Corner Man asked the Interlocuter "Why does a chicken cross de road?" That brain teaser was 'given up'.

"To get to the odder sider," and "the audience rocked with laughter."

From the Koi Hai programme simplicity watered down by goodygoody was the aim of the performers who sang simple songs well, finishing up with the absurd highest note they could reach

so as to gain all the applause that merited. Some of that foolishness still exists. Humility too, was the guiding policy for no performer's names would be seen on the programmes.

The final programme of the Koi-Hai's was performed at the Theatre Royal on July 19 1884; among the items were references to Pollard's Lilliputians, and Jharan Jackets.

The Lilliputians were young Australians barely in their teens who played Gilbert & Sullivan's operas with surprising ability despite an accent you could cut with a knife. They enjoyed great popularity until someone exposed the character of those running the Company, giving nasty details about the children. The charges were vehemently denied but there were too many who knew too much about it so Pollard's Lilliputians were forbidden to return.

In an effort towards originality tempered with economy Jharan Jackets, made from ordinary dusters—those with a thin red square in the pattern became fashionable right through the 1880's. Being soft and light in texture they were comfortable to wear. Gradually however, subalterns, believing that nothing succeeds like excess, indulged in patterns so loud that two suits were necessary to get all the pattern in. Joseph's Coat of Many Colours would have appeared like navy blue by comparison. Sir Frederick Roberts, then Commander-in-Chief of the Bengal Army, objected to officers under his command going about like animated drawing-room carpets, so orders were issued forbidding them. The Jharan Jacket might be worth bringing into fashion again.

Songs like "Wait till the Clouds Roll By," and "Please Give me a Penny, Sir." were popular. Anything sentimental was enjoyed by those who never thought of doing a sympathetic action. The barbarous cruelty of the age, particularly in regard to Christianity was incredible. Sir George Turner, in *Unorthodox Reminiscences* tells this story:—

"My sister Catherine died in 1871. I well remember how, some half an hour before her death, when we were all assembled round her bed, she looked up and said, "There is something wrong. I am going to die," and later, "Perhaps in an hour's time I shall be in hell paying for all my sins." What a terrible thing that a young, innocent, spotless child of fourteen should have such an awful thought as this owing to that damnable and infernal doctrine of eternal hell-fire that was so rigorously preached, and so often believed in, in the days of my childhood. I remember that I believed eternal fire to be a fact, but, thank Heaven, children now are not taught such cursed doctrines."

But the preachers of that class had a good innings with their "flag (missionary) days" where money was obtained under false pretences and through terrorism. Any captain of a liner who didn't kowtow to them would have lost his job. The only time he could get the laugh on them was when they fought among themselves as to who was to preach for a hot hour on the perils of the deep. What a stunt it has been! Well, we have to thank "Christy Minstrels" for making a start towards better things.

The Royal Bombay Yacht Club which came into existence as a "definitely embodied institution may be considered to date from 1880."

From the early part of the XIXth Century yachting and boat racing have been in vogue in Bombay. The *Bombay Times* of April 6th 1839 published the programme of a regatta in which one of the prizes was a Silver Cup of the value of £50. Efforts to connect up the Club's history do not appear to have been successful.

In August 1876 Her Majesty Queen Victoria acceded to the request that the Bombay Yacht Club be permitted to assume the title "Royal" and commanded it to be styled the Royal Bombay Yacht Club.

In 1880, during the Commodoreship of Captain Henry Morland, the ground at present occupied by the Club was obtained from the Bombay Port Trust on lease. The site was then a portion of Wellington Reclamation and adjoined what was called the Marine Parade. A further strip, used at that time as a road, lying between the Club site and the harbour, was added on the same terms.

Prior to the erection of the Club-house the Committee used to meet sometimes in the old P. & O. Office in Bruce Street, sometimes in the Apollo Bunder Refreshment Rooms, Kerner's Rooms, and occasionally in the Sailors' Home.

Once the Club was established on a firm basis an era of improvement set in. In 1897 the present area of ground in which the Club now stands was obtained from the Bombay Port Trust on a 50-years' lease.

Since its establishment the Club has steadily grown, the most noteworthy addition being the fine block of residential Chambers on the south side of the Apollo Bunder Road. The members of the Club are justly proud of the following distinction :

*By the Commissioners for executing  
the Offices of Lord High Admiral  
of the United Kingdom of Great  
Britain and Ireland, etc.*

WHEREAS we deem it expedient that the Members of the Royal Bombay Yacht Club, being natural born or naturalized British subjects, should be permitted to wear on board their respective vessels the Blue Ensign of Her Majesty's Fleet, with the distinctive marks of the Club on the fly thereof, viz., a Star of India surmounted by an Imperial Crown on the following conditions :—

We do, therefore, by virtue of the power and authority vested in Us, under the provisions of the 105th Section of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1854, hereby warrant and authorise the Blue Ensign of Her Majesty's Fleet with the distinctive marks of the Royal Bombay Yacht Club, thereon as aforesaid, to be worn on board the respective vessels belonging to the Royal Bombay Yacht Club, and the Members of such Yacht Club, being natural born or naturalized British subjects, accordingly, subject to the following conditions :—

1. Every vessel belonging to the Royal Bombay Yacht Club in order to be eligible to wear the Ensign authorised

by this Warrant, shall have been registered as a British Vessel in accordance with the Merchant Shipping Act, 1854.

2. The Ensign shall not, without Our authority in writing, be worn on board any vessel belonging to the Royal Bombay Yacht Club while such vessel is lent, on hire or otherwise, to any person not being a Member of the Club, or who being a Member of the Club is not a natural born or naturalized British subject.

Given under Our Hand and the Seal  
of the Office of Admiralty this  
Fifteenth day of May, 1894.

(Signed) WALTER T. KERR.

(Signed) G. H. NOEL.

By Command of their Lordships.

(Sd.) EVAN MACGREGOR.

In May 1939 the Delhi Club officially and irrevocably passed out of existence, a little more than a year after its doors were closed for the last time.

The Club went into liquidation on March 25, 1938, but carried on until the end of the month and after that the liquidators got down to the task of winding up its affairs. The balance available after all liabilities had been met was distributed among the Club servants, many of whom had found it difficult to obtain employment. Let us hope that they had something worth having, but

whatever it was, that was the kindest way of acting.

Three members only, one of whom came by accident, were at the end of a career of what was one of India's leading Clubs. It may leave a gap in the social life of Delhi, but the fact has to be faced—a large proportion of the Clubs must pass out of existence so many of them having lived for years on the generosity of the big liquor merchants.

In Assam, the Duars, and other planting districts, where about a third of the young men have gone a-soldiering, the Clubs will be wound up for lack of support as it may be years before any of the old members return from the wars to find their jobs filled by Indians.

One of those clubs which revels in slobbering sentimentality (with an eye for advertisement) and at one time loved to honour those who were known to be the avowed enemies of their country had a President who, ordinarily, resembled the bookmaker who was idly gaping about in a strange town when a nice old lady asked if he could tell her where the Second Presbyterian Church was. She was told:—"Sorry I can't." Then, on second thoughts he added:—"And I'm jiggered if I can tell you where the first one is either."

Having become President he took advantage of publicity to take interest in a church and finding hypocrisy the most profitable part of religion managed to obtain the title deeds of a house which he sold for a lakh and a quarter. With another Club member who got on the best side of

an Association which had something like Rs.40,000 and with that to the tune of the first four bars of the Blue Bells of Scotland, they were over the hills and far away.

Calcutta can stand a lot; the public are like the eels whom the old woman, when reproved for cruelty in skinning them alive assured the lecturer:—"Gawd bless yer 'eart, I've done it for years! They're used to it." But even among some of our skimmers of the public robbing a church was a bit over the line. That is, to do it in that way. Had a church been done out of ten times that amount by dud Company propaganda that would have been considered in order and the promoters on Sundays, would place their usual four anna bit in the plate for the promised Golden Harp on top side. So the ex-President was brought back and awarded twelve months' rigorous.

On his release the Club presented the unfortunate victim of misplaced piety with a bunch of flowers.

Commenting on this at a subsequent weekly meeting I ventured to ask—"If the President of this Club, after doing a year for robbing a church is, on release, considered so deserving of sympathy that the members present him with a bunch of flowers, what in the name of God would you have given him had he robbed a cathedral?"

The effect of that simple question was like that made on the girl who, describing what happened during an after-supper walk with a sailor and what he proposed told her girl friends:—"I gave him *such* a look!"



"Some people have a knack, we know  
 Of saying thing mal-a-propos,  
 And making all the world reflect  
 On what it hates to recollect." *Praed.*

Sport, and exercise, as understood in the modern sense do not appear to have attracted early settlers. There were men keen on shikar but they were exceptions. Among oldtime recreations were Cockfighting, Hawking, Fishing, Hunting, Bowls, Billiards, Backgammon and Gambling.

Cockfighting, still rife in the Philippines and other Pacific Islands attracted Myddleton. "They have good fighting Cocks, and they fight them with penknife blades instead of gavelocks." He states "The President gave me a cost of brave falcons which have killed many herons."

According to J. S. Cotton, whose letter of May, 27, 1905 was published by the Athenaeum, the first reference to Cricket in India is found in Downing's records (p. 185). During a voyage from Surat to Bombay in 1721, that while waiting some thirty miles from the latter place for one of their party "we every day diverted ourselves with playing cricket and other exercises" although "we never venture to recreate ourselves in this Method without having Arms for ourselves and guarded by some of our Soldiers, lest the country should come down upon us."

The *Bengal Gazette* for Saturday, Dec. 16 1780 gives an account which makes interesting reading.

'NEWS Extraordinary from the CRICKET Club.

The Gentlemen of the *Calcutta Cricket Club*

are getting themselves *into Wind*, and preparing to *take the Field* for a very active Campaign—but, as Prior observes:—

“The strength of every other member depends upon the Belly timber. They are laying in a *Capital Stock* of that necessary ammunition *Fed Beef and Claret*, allowing no other intervals, but the short time required for its concoction....many of the Club are so indefatigable as to work *double tides*; at this agreeable, tho’ fatiguing operation.

“Monsieur Class has the care of their MASTICATORS? AND to Examine them every Morning to see they are sharp, and in proper order. And the Doctor.....and.....are to hold themselves ready with LANCETS, and CATHARTICS, being retained by the Club in case any of the worthy Members should be suddenly attacked with a plethory.

“N.B.—A Reinforcement of OYSTERS is daily expected at Nichol’s Tavern to co-operate with the BEEF.”

The Calcutta Cricket Club enjoys today the use of a splendid site, as good as can be found anywhere. One reference is enough. At a Meeting, it was decided to admit Officers of Her Majesty’s Regiments, quartered in Fort William, Dum Dum, Alipore, and Barrackpore on payment of half fees because their pay did not permit them to incur the expense. As the Cricket Club had the free use of regimental bands, they had to show some appreciation, so the underpaid handsomen gave their services to help their officers enjoy themselves.

Historians differ but apparently the first Golf Club was established in Calcutta on the 24th March, 1839, of which Lord Ramsay was captain. It must have faded out more or less for it is recorded some thirty years later:—

“There was no Golf Club then in Calcutta. The first germs of the present prosperous institution are due to Mr. Morriss who was manager of the local branch of the Shanghai and Hongkong Bank. I forget his Christian name, but he was known as “Nosey” Morriss for an obvious reason, and he and his wife were among the most popular of Calcutta citizens. He really founded the Golf Club with J. H. Mudie, a famous player, and one or two others about the middle of the seventies. They trudged round the Maidan in the early morning with their caddies and clubs just where their successors still play—if they have not all removed themselves to Tollygunge—but it was not until the beginning of the eighties that the game caught on and the Club House was built, with its subsequent attractions of lawn tennis and one of the most perfect bowling-greens on which any enthusiastic skip ever sent down the jack.”

Golf, variously described as the “Foot-and-Mouth Disease—you foot it all day and mouth it all night,” or, as an American lady put it—“Golf is a game with a bagful of toys played by two people—a gentleman and a common person; the common person places a ball on a little bit of dirt and the gentleman knocks it off again.”

Fifty years ago a policeman related something about Golf.

"Part of my duties as Private Secretary was to see that all matters coming from the Secretariat for the orders of the Lieutenant-Governor were promptly placed before him. Finding one morning a particularly large file of papers labelled "The Calcutta Golf Club," my curiosity was aroused and before passing it on I quite "enjoyed" myself. As everyone who has been to Calcutta knows, the golf course is on the large Maidan surrounding Fort William, which is naturally the property of the Military Department. When therefore golf links were suggested, the permission of the Military had to be obtained—firstly, for the laying out of the course itself, and secondly, for the construction of the club-house. All very right and proper. But subsequent to the erection of this club-house, some rash, but no doubt over-zealous secretary, had had the audacity, without in the first place soliciting similar sanction, to erect a small insignificant lean-to corrugated iron shed, as a protection for the few caddies in the "rains". Hence this huge file of correspondence, hence this molehill which had been converted into a mountain, and hence the farce which was about to be enacted. A mere perusal of the papers was sufficient to show anyone the absurdity of the whole thing, and the orders received from the Governor on the point were only typical of the man. On a certain day, and at a certain hour, all the high officials, both civil and military in any way connected with the correspondence, were directed to assemble at the Calcutta Golf Club to meet His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor.

We drove up in state with the escort, and in the midst of cocked hats and feathers, the rattlings of scabbards and the jingling of spurs, we once and for all time decided that this caddies' shelter measuring some ten feet by eight, could not by any stretch of the imagination be utilised as a shelter trench for a Russian Army attacking Fort William!! (About 1890)

*And That Reminds Me.* Stanley Coxon.

Although the Calcutta Rowing Club did not come into existence until after the "Revolt" of the Bengal Army it is the second oldest sporting club in India. It may be that the Racquets Club dates earlier but that game does not appear to be played today. .

Apparently boat racing was popular in much earlier days. In June 1814 "A rowing match yielded much amusement. Ten boats entered, each paying a gold mohur, the last to enter having to pay double. The race was run from the edge of the river facing the Respondentia." (That would be about opposite the South corner of Eden Gardens.) On the opposite side a vessel was moored which had to be rounded when the rowers were to return to the starting flag. The boats were of various descriptions, Boliahs, Dingies, Gigs, &c., some rowed by oars and others by paddles. All the boats moved off in fine style, and stretched across the river nearly in a line. Soon, however, it was perceived that the chief struggle would be between a dingy managed by Mr. Hettson, and a gig belonging to Captain Hudson, and manned by six picked Europeans, from the *Marianne*. The latter,

gained the day, coming to the shore about a quarter of a minute only before the dingy, and performing the task a distance of nearly two miles in nine minutes and a half. It is believed that her victory would have been doubtful, if the Manjhee of Captain Hudson's dingy had not twice fallen overboard during the contest.

When the Rowing Club started boats could not be brought from England so two were shipped from Hong Kong in the ill-fated steamer *Lightning* which was lost off the Sand Heads during the great cyclone of 1864 with a big shipment of gold. The same cyclone wrecked the Club House at Chandpal Ghat; fragments of the boats were found under the Town Hall portico but nothing was ever seen of anything else.

After many ups and downs and changes of residence the Rowing Club is now on the Garia Hat Lake where some Indian Rowing Clubs keep it company.

The late W. S. Burke, writing about the activities of the Calcutta Rowing Club (founded in 1858) gave an account of a Club dinner held at Bonsard's Hotel in 1872. There were no less than 32 items on the bill of fare—four soups, four roasts, four entrees, and four curries included, and a host of "trimmings". Hosts and guests seemed to have survived this Gargantuan feed and it is still pleasant to reflect that several of them still live to recall memories of the occasion." (That was written in 1923.)

.. "And if they could eat, they undoubtedly could drink. Among the Club's earliest assets there was a large cut glass goblet which held half

an imperial gailon. It used to be almost a solemn rite among those old timers to have this filled and then refilled, with the wine of the country which in those days was *brandy pawnee*. The brew used to be ladled out in their little rummers, and we can picture the men of those days after the third or fourth refill, toddling home to dinner at peace with all the world and, as Samuel Pepys would say, "well raddled".

The exclusiveness of Clubs formed the subject for much recrimination some seven years ago. While none can question the right of men who go to the expense of keeping up a Club to keep it to themselves, the attitude taken by members to needlessly stick to caste privileges is often entitled to criticism. They seem to believe that

"We are the choice selected few,  
May all the rest be damned.  
There's room enough in hell for you,  
We can't have heaven crammed."

In November 1935, Sir Chimanlal Setalvad addressed an open letter to Lord Willingdon on the eve of his retirement, complaining that His Excellency was about to dine at the Byculla Club where it was feared that he might review the five years of his administration. This was particularly painful to Sir Chimanlal for it happened that the rule of the Club debarred Indians from being there.

This letter attracted attention; the subject of the exclusiveness of European Clubs led to correspondence and leading articles all over India.

One of the Indian correspondents suggested

that "Indians should give up some of their sensitiveness and should cease taking offence where none is meant. They have to banish their inferiority complex and cultivate a sense of humour".

They would have to give up a lot more than that for if there is one quality which cannot be cultivated it is a sense of humour. A man without humour is as different from one blessed with that gift as a bullock cart differs from an aeroplane.

If men care to form themselves into a Club to bear the expense of its upkeep, they have every right to keep out non-members without giving any explanation. Nobody complains about the exclusiveness of Officers' Messes which are Clubs where the Members are more or less under discipline. Should the Viceroy or the Commander-in-Chief wish to address the members nobody grumbles, even though it may be known that the address is on some matter of national importance.

Social equality means a mingling of the sexes of classes or races, and when Indian women do not take any part, that does not make for social equality. There must be many who have long been on excellent terms with Indian gentlemen and have never set eyes on their women folk.

Surprise is often expressed at finding Orientals who have been to a Western university more full of bitterness against Europeans than are those who stay at home.

The Jesuits, so one is told, claim that if they



are given the child up to the age of seven, anyone can have it afterwards, meaning, apparently, that by then the child's mind is so loaded with dogma, rites, penalties and fear of the hereafter, that other teachers cannot change it. If that is so, they are successful.

Hindu religion, inextricably mixed with social customs, 3500 years old, is far more exacting than the teachings of Jesuits and has a firmer hold. In most middle class families boys live under the adoration of a doting mother up to the age of twelve. After that they may attend a Mission school, but mother, full of rites, signs and tokens rules the roost and education is little more than memorising to get a Government job.

Up to the time boys leave for Europe they are treated as children, a four anna bit being occasionally given them by their mother. Wealthy men have told me that even their married sons live in the family and mother handles all the money, makes daughters-in-law do all the work and buys them their clothes. (No wonder Bengalis say that the best of mothers-in-law are nothing but large boils.) An effort is frequently made to get the lads married before they start their travels; the dowry comes in handy for the fare, and a European daughter-in-law would not find much of a welcome in a Hindu family circle.

At their lodgings and in the university, the surroundings clash with all they have been taught in their homes. For one thing, superstition, the greatest burden the world bears, governs their daily life and is never absent from

their thoughts. Voltaire said that "superstition is to religion what astrology is to astronomy—the very foolish daughter of a wise mother." The only way to get rid of a superstition is to instal another—and then you have two.

There is the story of a Hindu who, after spending ten years in England, boy and man, eventually obtained his degree and passed into the Indian Medical Service. Having wrongly diagnosed the complaint of a British officer, bringing the patient to death's door, he refused to make an immediate change as the moon was unpropitious.

Did Hindu boys go to a public school and get away from home mollycoddling they would benefit and, if it is more or less unlawful to force Christianity upon them, what is good in their great epics should be taught them. Our sobsisters, full of religion but lacking in sense have had too much to say in the rather dismal efforts at making people forsake their own religion.

Hindu boys receive no moral uplift in Christian schools, their education having been on barren secular lines. As a result they imbibe indigestible knowledge and a certain familiarity with Western manners and customs which unsettles them, so they return to India with a red tongue in a green head and 100% Hindu. There are, of course, a few exceptions, just as there are Gentiles in New York, (but not enough to count) and in a land of needy politicians suffering from political jaundice they find many friends.

Politics is the struggle for control, based upon

lies, fraud, and force. Mosca found that the struggle for power in politics is even greater than the struggle for existence. The knowledge of that led Mr. William Randolph Hearst, the millionaire monarch of the Press who has never been classed as a friend of England to attack Rabindranath Tagore. In 1931 he must have affected the financial side of that politician's Hatred-of-Britain stunts by stripping of humbug the mouthings of one of those who gratify their sense of malevolence while filling their miserly pockets. Unfortunately, what "Poet" Tagore said in reply doesn't appear to have come to light. Hearst's blunt criticism enlightened some of his readers which probably bred amongst those he attacked more hatred than that with which they started on tour.

"Rabindranath Tagore, Hindu poet and philosopher, was the guest of honor at a dinner in New York the other night. The function was attended by 350 supposedly sane Americans who paid \$25 apiece to look at and listen to him.

"The eminent Oriental was good enough to say in his speech that some things in America met with his approval. Then, as is the habit of gentlemen of his type, he went on to remark that "You of the Western world have exploited those who are helpless and those who are weak."

"There was more in that vein, and the sage concluded with the observation that: "The greater part of this world suffers from your Western civilisation."

"His hearers, 350 of them, applauded the sentiment.

"This sort of thing is an old 'story, and nobody can blame Tagore or other celebrities from across the Pacific because they indulge in it. They have found that they can put it over with impunity—in fact, that a certain number of soft-headed Americans consider it 'so spiritual' that they cheerfully pay real money for the privilege of being insulted by these visiting medicine men.

"In behalf of the rest of the community, however, it seems time that somebody called the bluff.

"The yogis, babus, and pundits from highly civilised India, the slick independent propagandists from the Philippines, the oily tongued fakirs from half a dozen other tropical climes are beginning to be a national pest. They swarm up and down the United States like a plague of locusts. They retail a lot of eloquent claptrap about conditions in their own countries, not one-tenth of which is true.

"Then they go back home with their pockets full of American cash and their heads full of well-founded contempt for the gullibility of the American people.

"Tagore, for example, has the colossal nerve to tell us what a terrible thing Western civilisation is for the oppressed races of the East.

"His own India is kept from going to complete smash only by the power and justice of Britain as he knows.

"His own people are fed in times of famine by the hated British.

"His millions of Bengal brethren are saved

from destruction at the hands of fighting Mahomedans solely by these same British.

"His entire land is preserved from tyranny or anarchy only because Britain has the strength of character and the strength of empire to preserve it.

"Then he comes along and wrings his hands—at \$25 a wring about oppression.

(If Mr. Hearst had seen the condition of villages owned by the Poet what a lot more would have been written!)

"Law, order, sanitation, schools and colleges, highways, railroads, and better wages are the oppression which Britain and America have imposed on India and the Philippines.

"Dirt, disease, hunger, superstition and appalling ignorance constitute the Oriental 'higher civilisation,' which Tagore and his ilk extol.

"Sane Americans and British are slightly fed up with the Oriental gentlemen who come here to throw mud at Western civilisation and Western ideas."

Every line of that is true. Indians say nothing about forming their own Clubs finding it more gratifying to themselves and their friends to whine about being barred from existing ones.

Dr. Johnson divided men into two classes—the clubable and the unclubable. Indians always wonder what a man's caste is. That therefore hampers all their actions; everything in social matters languishes as soon as they get control. Caste, and the load of the climate saps energy and makes them put off until the week after tomorrow what ought to be done today. .

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, a Hindu writer, published in 1942 a 1000 page book on *What the Hindus Have Done to Us*, which "is perhaps the most devastating indictment of 3000 years of the tyranny of caste Hindus over the Un-touchables."

His theory is that "Hinduism is an evil social system sanctified by religion, with basic principles that are not open to change." It recognises no inherent Rights of Man; it recognises Duties for one Section and Privileges for another, with a permanently graded hierocracy under a sanctified law and held in awe by its victim through a million terrors in this world and the next. Its methods have no parallel in the history of the world.

For Hindus, therefore, to complain about British snobbery shows complete disregard for the supersnobbishness of caste among themselves. How many Hindus would have a meal with lowcaste people? In July 1941 Sir Hari Sing Gour was on a tour trying to get at England by bleating about Democracy. As India is the last place in the universe for democracy to exist he was only hearing himself talk. By a piece of good luck he was refused admission to some London hotels, which gave something to show how badly down-trodden Indians were treated in a democratic country.

Lord Willingdon was led into taking a hand but Sir Hari got such a trouncing from that practical philosopher Mr. H. G. Wells, that he must have been sorry for himself. What would he have to say about Mahant Posu Das, a

Member of the Legislative Assembly who, in January 1942 filed a complaint in Court against the proprietors of two Indian hotels who refused to serve him with a cup of tea because he was a low caste Hindu?

While there is nothing finer than the tactful courtesy of the Indian gentleman of the old school, hotel people in England complain that young Indians are either too familiar or too arrogant with the staff, and often too stingy. When they use the lavatory they are "negligent" about pulling the chain, considering that the work of a menial, which arouses considerable resentment. Many too make a long ceremony of loudly clearing their throat in the morning, but that is not rudeness with them. Manners differ.

A writer of sailor stories tells one about the Persian Gulf. The local Pasha of Nine Tails invited the flagship officers to a feast. One two-and-a-half striper gorged, pushed pieces of fat mutton into his host's mouth and frequently returned thanks with disgusting violence, annoying the Admiral until he nearly burst.

"You wait until I get you back aboard the frigate!" growled the old sea dog. "I'll give you something to remember all this!"

On the officers taking their departure the Pasha presented the youngster with a silver hilted dagger paying him the compliment of having the most perfect manners of any gentlemen he had ever met.

The Calcutta Club, founded in 1908 demands that an Indian and a European go up for election together. That principle is carried right through!

the management. No person is said to be ineligible for membership on account of race, politics, or creed. That, at any rate, is stated in the rules.

The Willingdon Club in Bombay owes its existence to the persuasive powers of Lady Willingdon. Indians and Europeans are in equal numbers. The entrance fee was originally Rs. 250. Now it is said to be Rs. 600, which speaks for itself.

Sporting Clubs are numbered by scores all over the country and the club habit is forming from them. O. Henry says the biggest club in the world is the down-and-out-club which must be true about India, for beggars in big cities are under one control.

It is also remarkable that each beggar has a different cry or appeal, showing close organisation and control. Indians dislike being told that no country can consider itself civilised when it allows its diseased, deformed, blind and lunatics to beg and die in the streets.

As for night clubs! Mr. Somerset Maugham, in his introduction to Peter Arno's *Cartoon Review* says this about them:

"I had been told also that Peter Arno is a perpetual frequenter of night clubs. Since I never go to them I felt I would never see him, but even if I went I did not suppose that I should be so fortunate as to chance upon him, for the night club is the perfect hide-out. Every night club is like every other; in the same smoke-laden air the same orchestra plays the same tune while the same couples, like sardines, canned but



amorous, gyrate upon the same exiguous floor; at the same bar the same men listlessly absorb the same drinks and occasionally exchange the same wisecracks with the same bar-tender; the same socialities are always just leaving the same table to go on to the same night club a few streets off where they will sit at the same table. Place brings no diversity and when you are in a night club it is all one whether you are in New York, in Paris, in Istambul or in Tokyo; in fact, with a little imagination you can circumnavigate the globe and experience all the educational advantages of foreign travel by keeping your feet firmly fixed on the bar of any night club in the country. But that of course you can never do, for, as though the Hound of Heaven were after you, you are compelled down the nights and down the days to flee from one devastating sameness to another."

For a man who starts off by telling you he never goes to night clubs that is a pretty good effort. At any rate he knows more about night clubs than I do but I gather that we must not look to the night club for the man of tomorrow as the man of the night club seldom arrives home until tomorrow.

## CLOSING TIME

The difference between men in England and those in India is that in the East there are no idle among the British. All work for their living and have therefore a more cheerful outlook on life.

Sir Denison Ross who was said to be a great Oriental scholar was of opinion that one man's yarn is another man's chestnut, but as some of my chestnuts are old enough to be yarns, they are worth risking an encore.

Before this century of acceleration men moved about leisurely and provided their own amusements. A cheerful Bohemian crowd gathered at Spence's where the general chord was old Rabelais up-to-date, and banter, the income tax of popularity, was the order of the day.

One of the crowd at the hotel round table was "Dad" Grimes, who came out representing Birmingham firms and filled in his spare time on the staff of *Indian & Eastern Engineering*. He was handicapped by a swivel eye which when he told a 'cuffer' always slipped over to the right engage. His stories may have been lacking in accuracy but they were rich in detail. Admirers said he had grown past the age to have a conscience but in the East men age early.

One morning when the sun was very much on top and Dad Grimes, with a cold drink in

front of him and a fan going full bore came out with "This is a good country. All it lacks is cool nights and cold drinks." "That is all hell lacks" remarked a stranger. Grimes went on—

"Any of you know Jock Campbell?"

"Six of 'em." said one.

"I mean the one in jute?"

"Three of 'em."

"No. 'Whisky' Jock. The human sponge. His father committed suicide over a pair of boots."

"Did he? Then I'll bet they were tight."

"Well, Jock and I were in Oudh, about 15 miles from Lucknow."

Some asked what they were doing there and another assumed they were robbing graves. Ignoring that Grimes went on: "Did Jock ever tell you how I saved his life? Never mind about 'What for,' I saved his life. *I'm* telling this story! He was bathing in the Gumti when I saw he was in difficulties so I jumped in without undressing. Getting hold while he was sinking for the last time I had to let him go. He'd been eating onions. I'm like the old woman who said onions were her pet abortion. Humanity, humanity my boys took charge and I got him out; upended him to get the water run out and saved his life. Didn't he ever tell you about it?"

It turned out later that Grimes couldn't swim but who could spoil a good story because it wasn't true?

A man on the staff of the *Statesman* who was often in trouble for being too often and too

long enjoying the company at the round table in Spence's was keen on Tibet. He was entertaining when on his favorite subject. A scholar and a gentleman and a judge of whisky he eventually founded the Buddhist Society in London.

At the editorial discussion one morning he mentioned that he had seen a swarm of pink chickens in Freeschool Street. The editor looked hard, took a long breath, put his pen down and said: "That's quite enough. Go home for a couple of days and when you are more fit to receive it, a letter will be handed to you giving our reasons for dismissing you."

That evening others on the staff reported the same thing; they had seen at least fifty pink chickens. It happened to be the Kali puja when red powder and red fluid is thrown on all Hindus and the chickens got their share. Of course he was indignant; to be spoken to in such a way, particularly as it happened to be the first time that he was blameless, was hurtful in the extreme so he resigned leaving with a grievance and many sympathisers.

In the good old Volunteering days when men learnt something about soldiering, helping to turn England into a military nation (for which they were heartily despised by the "Regulars") the Cossipore Artillery were recruited almost entirely from Scots working in Bengal jute mills, who took to gunnery almost as keenly as they did to pegs. Their officers were of that type, big round the waist, who, when a friend gave them a look in made the bearer open a fresh bottle of

whisky and the cork was immediately thrown over the verandah.

At the Annual Inspection at Jafapore, the word of command was given to "Empty Guns!"

Officers went forward to hear what the General had to say by way of praise with faint damns; all were listening with quiet attention, when the Sergeant Major crept behind his Commanding Officer and, in tragic tones told him "No. 3 gun hasn't fired, Sir!"

"Good God!" said the horrified C. O. "Tell 'em to let it off quietly!" And, as the narrator said "you should ha' seen 'em jump."

In the days before Hill stations became respectable, a Major in the 7th Dragon Guards sent a circular round Umballa to the effect that my wife will not go to the hills this year as I intend to look after her myself. He didn't say it in quite those words but in the language frequently heard on the polo ground.

A political officer serving in a native state brought his sister from a suburban place at Home. She was vocally thrilled with everything she saw particularly admiring the 13-year-old Kumar, son of the Rajah.

One morning while with her brother among a crowd of State officials, the Kumar, handsomely dressed, rode by on a smart pony. He certainly was a fine youngster and sat well in the saddle.

"What a larvely boy!" she exclaimed, "A perfect picture."

"Yes, Mad-dam" said one of the State officials, "and now he will get married."

"Married?" almost shrieked the suburbanite,

"How too utterly absurd. Surely a child like that is far too young to marry.

"Well, Mad-dam, we got him one eesmall girl of about ten years and she is now pregnant so he will soon be married."

Suburbanism was speechless.

A cold-weather visitor was Steve Margrett, a horse importer in a large way, straight as they make 'em and always as bright as a Spring morning entertained the gathering with a story about some outside bookies who were in a dilemma about getting home after a bad day at a suburban meeting.

Half a dozen of these outsiders met after the races near the railway station; each had the same story—"stone motherless broke." How to get back to Melbourne, except on shank's pony worried them. One of the "Stony-Brokers" had half a crown, but what was that amongst so many?" "Lend me that half-crown," said one *Chevalier d'industrie*, a 'bush lawyer' "and you shall all ride back to Melbourne like toffs—first class."

With that in his hand he approached a railway porter and asked if he wanted to earn half a dollar? "Rather," said he. "Well, then, lend us yer cap for five minutes and I'll give it yer." To this the porter agreed, so exchanging hats, he marched on to the platform, boldly walked to a first-class compartment with, "All tickets here, please." The occupants, seeing the official cap, unsuspectingly handed up their tickets; the porter's cap was returned, and the broken Bookies did not walk home.

A man on the staff of the Indian Daily News told us of a rumpus in the office over his report of a concert at the Dalhousie Institute. A thin girl forgot the words of her song so she had another try and got through. The paper came out the following day with—"With the exception of a slight bitch in the first half, the concert was a pronounced success." Luckily his Mss. with an "h" was found and he was exonerated, but the friends of the girl would have liked to slaughter somebody but didn't quite know who.

Two men, acquaintances in England, casually met in the Great Eastern Hotel. They celebrated. One became a general nuisance, drinking, shouting and quarrelling. To avoid him the other moved to Spence's. At the round table he was telling the crowd that getting away from the pest made him feel as lucky as if anyone had given him a four-coloured kitten, when the pest came along and took a seat. "Hallo," he said to the other, "have they turned you out too?"

E. W. J. Zimmermann, one of our amateur actors who managed for a time the shipping department of Messrs Anderson Wright, was an amateur actor who sang comic songs in a serious style told of a happening about a Norwegian vessel chartered to take a cargo to the West Indies.

The vessel was to unmoor at daylight on Monday morning so orders were given on Saturday midday. On Sunday night the captain rushed upstairs at 4 Esplanade East to ask "Vere vosh does Vest Indies?"

He fetched up there all right showing that

he knew more about navigation than he did about geography.

S. J. Sarkies, a good amateur violinist being told that the Calcutta Presidency Battalion had no regimental March Past volunteered to write one. It turned out to be a shandy of Chopin, Bach, and Mozart, with a touch of a banjo breakdown and a few trombone tarararas for going round corners. On New Year's Day there were the usual doings; the Presidency Battalion, with companies mustering about fifteen files, hopped past on two left legs to Sarkies' masterpiece which the regular bandmasters on the parade dubbed the "March of the Demi-mondaine to the Pawn-brokers."

One of Calcutta hotel owners complained that his advertisement for Fish Suppers was unpleasingly displayed. On top was "Foul Breath, End Pyorrhea, Bleeding, Spongy Gums. Home Remedies." At sides and bottom were "~~B~~undo, Sovereign Remedy for Looseness and Pain in Bone, including Pills." "Bacilliary Dysentery and Cholera (Early Stage) and Specifics for Leprosy and Leucoderma." Hardly attractive when you come to think of it.

A man showed an Indian paper with attractive headlines:—

- "A.....Journalist Married at a Wedding."

At an exhibition in Calcutta an Indian caterer had a large colored poster depicting a red-faced, red-whiskered, blue-eyed planter with a huge topi and special large No. 1 sized boots who had given a khitmagar a mighty kick which lifted his pagri a foot and capsized the tea tray.



Crowds of delighted Indians read—  
Take Away That Bloody Tea.  
Bring Me Some G. P. Tea.

With a lack of humour the Police Commissioner had the placard taken down.

Neither the editorial nor the advertisement side of a paper is always the culprit in a 'slip-up.' A man quoted one to a padre: "What greater love can a man have who lays down his wife for his friend?" The parson chortled, then turning grave, said "I do wish you hadn't told me that one; I'm sure to come out with it in a sermon."

That parson was a sport. Mark Twain said. "All through my life I never realised that people who read the Bible don't want to make fun of it, and people who don't read the Bible don't see any fun to make of it." Pious Christians are generally bilious through over-eating and lack humour as a result.

Which reminds me of the sloppy young chaplain visiting a military prison. "Do the prisoners attend Divine Service on the Sabbath? He asked.

"Hoo Hoo! I never let 'em off *that*!" reassured the holy man about their spiritual welfare.

A chaplain mentioned that he was going to read prayers for the dying over a sick soldier. "Giving him his rations for his last march," said a cynic who may not have intended to touch the heart, but that does.

An insurance man from the Far East told a story about the Shanghai Fire brigade. A

Chinese brigade officer wrote his report about a fire at a school. "A fireman had bravely climbed up the ladder three times and each time had come down pregnant." Asked to explain, he referred to the dictionary definition—"with child".

It has been said there are no good losers—some men can't act. That hardly applies to racing men who accept defeat with true Christian forbearance.

Few now remember Captain Horace Hayes, the Emperor of all Writers on matters connected with the horse, who launched his first literary effort in 1875—*A Guide to Horse Training and Management in India*.

To say he knew his way about says little. In the 1880's when the horse was a noble animal (with petrol shortage it looks like coming back again) Hayes was a great man, much admired, but in need of watching.

Jack Scott, one of the outstanding trainers in Indian racing circles told a crowd at Spence's what happened in Mussoorie. Hayes casually asked how long it took to ride down to Rajpur. Scott said he hadn't the slightest idea.

"But you must have some sort of a notion?"

"None in the world," said Scott but feeling like the Irish major he said to himself: "I smell a rat. I can see it floating in the air but I'll nip it in the bud because I'm not going to be stabbed in the back with a side wind," he rode down to make sure.

A week later the question was repeated and after some juggling with indifference Scott thought it might be done in so many minutes.

"Bet you five hundred dibs you can't do it?"  
"Done," said Scott, feeling he saw money for jam.

Three days later Scott started down hill. At the first bit of a village all the villagers, their women and children, carts, cattle, goats, charpoys, pots and pans—even chickens and pariah dogs, were on the road. Nothing could pass until some carts were moved. That happened more than once. Scott lost by three minutes.

Paying over the stakes he learnt that Hayes, with an Indian wearing khaki and a belt, had gone down two days previously to warn the people that Government wanted to count everything they had and it was to be on the road before seven in the morning.

With pious resignation Scott said—"He was too clever for me."

A few years ago the Prime Minister of an independent State paid a semi-demi-visit to Darjeeling. During his stay he wrote to the Secretary of the Planters' Club to ask for the loan of forty-five tables. Each table had to be three feet square to accommodate three dishes as well as plates.

It transpired that he had invited forty-five important Indians to a dinner. As none of the guests would like to be made to feel he was of lower caste than the others, the host decided that the best way to avoid complications was to give each guest a separate table. A triumph of discretion over tact. And Indians gabble about democracy!!

A sample of 'O to see ourselves as others see us' appeared in the *Calcutta Monthly Journal*

for January 1827 when "His Royal Highness Prince Brian Boroiné, a Maori came on a short spell in Calcutta. He appreciated the fact that the "Sea King whom I accompanied to these shores had never evinced the slightest desire to eat me. But the Sea King having gone on land, and not having returned for two days, I became alarmed about his fate, particularly when I saw with my own eyes several persons roasting a dead man on a fire by the river side. This raised my suspicion and I began to see that the people are not so barbarous as they give out (perhaps the better to serve their own purposes) for here was positive proof of a much better taste than I had given them credit for." Well, fifty years earlier he would have seen poor people eating what was left of some of the bodies, such was the prevailing state of poverty.

One of the regular attendants of Spence's was N. C. Jellico, blonde, burly, cheerful and capable; he married one of Spence's barmaids who was as fair and almost as big as himself. The marriage was normal so far as one knew. His daily programme was like that of many others.

In the early morning his bearer hung over the bed with a second mate's nip—three fingers deep—and a bottle of soda. The first flicker of his master's eyelids led to the soda water stopper being punched in; with the peg duly stowed 'Jelly' got out of bed. The mail came later and was read while sipping another before breakfast. At that meal he took nothing more with it but a nice bottle of beer off the ice and then office.

As soon as the rumble of the office gharry was heard on the cobbled stones, the bearer, looking over the office verandah had a hefty refresher ready. On his master's right foot touching the ground the soda stopper was punched in and with that flanking the letters, Jelly got down to business. After that he was a strict teetotaller until 12-30 when he adjourned to Spence's where he sat with the Knights of the Round Table—all good humour; no politics, religion, or prejudices. A few sociable drinks, seldom more than six, then home to tiffin where he really enjoyed a cold beer with a liquer to keep it comfy.

The return to office meant a revival of the procedure of the morning. Between 2-30 and 5-30 Jelly kept right off it until he drove to the Boozaliers' Club on the Maidan where with a healthy crowd of friends, he allayed his thirst after the labours of the day. Before 8 he was home; did himself well at dinner, cards and chain drinking supervened, when, quite well pleased with himself he slept like a top.

Fourteen years of that led to a change from a fine fresh complexion to khaki patches on his face; a doctor was called in to see what was really wrong. Foolishly he prescribed 'one peg a day,' which never stopped a man from drinking more. Jellico, however, decided to adhere strictly to medical advice, so he ordered from Osler & Co. a special tumbler which would hold that one peg consisting of a bottle of whisky and one soda. Before that arrived his friends reported that his 'liver had burst.'

Four days later he went to join the angels and a crowd of friends assembled at the cemetery one morning to give him a farewell. They waited in vain. I was asked to drive Brown, his manager, to ascertain what had happened. No coffin had been sent to the house so we drove to the undertaker's. On the way we saw four *domes* with the coffin on their shoulders trying to force their way into the Bristol while the *durwan* loudly expostulated. After cursing the *domes* for a lot of fools, we returned to the cemetery. On the way back I said to Brown, who was breathing stertorously and trying to match an obstinate fly—"I don't wonder at Jelly going off the hooks. He could never have had less than two bottles a day."

"Well, what's that?" asked Brown. "That's all right as long as you take a little exercise; besides, he always took soda with it!"

In the afternoon monsoon rain came down in bucketsful and when the friends assembled, the grave was full to the gunnel; coolies with buckets were trying to bale out the water while the undertaker was busy with a  $\frac{3}{4}$ " auger boring holes in the coffin so that it would sink. One of the mourners remarked: "Poor old Jelly is having a . . . sight more water than he's had for years!"

There have been many like him—good fellows too. I once stayed with an indigo planter who had Jellico's mentality. He said—"I drink a bottle of square-face and a bottle of whisky every day. You see, the whisky counteracts the effects of the squareface, and the squareface

counteracts the effects of the whisky, so I'm practically a teetotaller."

An American on a world tour said the thing that struck him most was buying a rupee ticket at the Calcutta Zoo for a pint of rhinoceros urine and a colored official with a tin can tied to the end of a bamboo got it for him. Indians believe it is a remedy for diabetes, and, when poured on live charcoal, the fumes cure asthma.

A teapot caused a Scott to talk about one he bought in London "I looked in casually at an auction and saw a silver teapot being sold. Someone bid two pounds seventeen and six. Anybody could see it was worth more than that so I said 'three pounds' and got it. When it came to paying I found it was three pounds an ounce I had to pay but it's a fine teapot!"

A cheery planter seemed annoyed over a slight jar with his local bank manager. He asked if he might have an overdraft. "Have you an account here? What's your name?" led to a big book being brought in through which the manager looked so long the planter thought he'd fallen asleep. The question was repeated. "May I have an overdraft?" "Certainly" was the reply, 'you can have mine.'

That was about as helpful as the telegram sent to Spence's. "Please reserve one room for the bride, bridegroom and co-respondent."

George Hardie had been bridge building in the Panjab. A gang of coolies were digging, preparing the ground, when they all disappeared. There was no apparent reason. Another lot took on the work and in three days they disappeared.

As there was no trouble of any sort Hardie was puzzled but other men turned up and he kept his eye on them. A large earthen pot was struck by a *kodali* and found to be full of gold coins, so the third lot scattered but the mystery was solved.

The amount of buried treasure in India must be enormous. Alexander the Great is supposed to have left £125 millions in Bhawalpur but apparently it is by accident only that discoveries are made.

Hardie, in 1943 has the unusual record of having spent 47 years in India without going Home, or to the hills; during that time he was but seven days in hospital. For many years his bridge work compelled him to live on the country away from ordinary cooking, so there was little comfort. The fact is that India is a much healthier country to live in than people believe.

The most remarkable inscription in all the cemeteries in India is to be found in Agra, on a slab to the right of the entrance gate.

"Sacred to the memory of Mrs Catrines Thomas,

Died 22 December 1894 aged 145."

For nearly thirty years "Jimmy" Mather has sat in the same place at Spence's where unfailing good-humour both in his business which is a good one and at the tiffin table endears him to everybody. During the 1914-18 war he joined up quickly like many others "so as not to miss the fun" as they put it in those days but one doesn't hear that in this world-wide slogging



match. His war-time experiences in Mesopotamia led him to dislike office work almost as much as he detested mules. For a time he was adjutant of one of the finest of the old Rajput regiments where he learnt all the Army abbreviations and how to get through a pile of correspondence in uncomfortable surroundings.

One day the Commanding Officer asked:—  
“Do you read these papers before singing them?”

“Yes, Sir, most of them.”

“Well, look at this! No. 1234567 Sepoy Ram Singh—Reason for discharge—unlikely to make an efficient soldier. Length of service, 24 years, 279 days.”

“I’m afraid I missed that one, Sir.”

“That is obvious, but you gave him a damned good trial.”

At a regimental show upcountry a sub, dubbed by the troops a “monocular toff” was passing round the ices. While attending a corpulent lady in a low-necked dress, a pretty girl passed by which caused him to adjust his monocle. The tray tilted. The night was hot and the ices took charge shooting into the space between the stout person’s bodice and chest.

Much dismayed, the young soldier asked:  
“By Jove! shall I go after them or will you?”

That brings to mind a moonlight dance at a small country place in England. Unfortunately there was no moon. When the secretary of the Club was paying the bill the landlord asked how things went. “All right, except that the dancers complained that dancing on the grass made the going rather heavy.”

"Ah," said the landlord, "that must be due to the cattle show we had here yesterday."

"And I suppose," said the thrilled lady guest, "that the Prince is staying here incognito?"

"Well, Mum, replied the hall porter judicially, I wouldn't quite say that but he certainly had a few over the odds last night."

The first Lord Lytton thought little of the Indian Civil Service in spite of the fact that it was said when God made the world he asked the I.C.S. what shape it ought to take. In Simla he found "our own social surroundings are so grievously good. Members of Council and heads of departments hold prayer meetings at each other's houses thrice a week, and pass the remainder of their time in writing spiteful minutes against each other." (They mistook bilious constipation for holiness.) "The young ladies are not allowed to dance lest they should dance to perdition: and I believe that moonlight picnics were forbidden last year by order of the Governor-General in Council, lest they should lead to immorality. I wish I could report that our Empire is as well defended as our piety." (It is those who preach Christian love with hate in their hearts who have done most to push us into this present mess.)

Scandal, like slander, loves a shining mark, so a few yarns about Lord Curzon might as well be told. At the time he was reclaiming that part of the Calcutta Maidan known as the loafers' corner, George Lane was the Kew gardener who went every day to carry out his Imperial master's orders. As we all know, George Curzon was pompous perfection in pronunciation, a word

epicure, and George Lane delighted in an occasional chat with that mighty potentate, feeling sure of a decoration when the work was done.

No Scot who could rattle his "R's" like a toy machine gun was more proud of an accent than George Lane with his pure Dorset. To hear him come out with "Ha! Ha! doan'ee!" was worth paying for. And when refreshing himself in Spence's he used to go all out about the future.

One morning, after everything had been as he put it "in praper workin' arder," he turned up with his chin on his waistbelt because of a difference about trees Curzon ordered to adorn the site.

Without thinkin' Oi sez to His Ex' 'earty loike, "Ha! Ha! Oi 'm avraid Oi must veto that, Your Excellency." In a flash uv a gnat's eye Oi zeed a scowl go acrast 'is old phizzog which gied Oi a vright. We'd been gettin' along well afore that zide zlip. When I got along hwoam I opened my ninepenny dictionary and there it was—'veto', a ryal interdiction, zoo there'll be no C.Oi.E ver me to put on on Zunday marnens."

Whether that regrettable incident affected his chances or not, Lane left India unhonored beyond a farewell notice in the *Statesman* adorned with his portrait taken at an age when he was romantic enough to court his sweetheart by 'writen her neame on th' pigstye door.

It may not be known that Curzon Gardens are in the design of the Union Jack. The round plot in the middle was intended for a statue of Lady Curzon but he married again and nothing was done. As a tribute to his ingrained modesty.

he decided that two statues were sufficient; a third bearing the name of Curzon might be looked upon as swank. He therefore has but two—both put up by himself.

Curzon paid an official visit to Assam and at Tezpur was entertained by the tea planters who were introduced, one by one by Mr. George Moore of the Borjuli Tea Estate. Everybody was in Sunday clothes and best behaviour. Jock Stewart, the oldest planter in the district, who had gone 'Native', in a ragged get-up with battered topi, walked round the gathering, hands in pocket, scowling and full of contempt. He attracted Viceregal attention.

"Who is that remarkable person?" He was told that Stewart was a pioneer who stayed on his garden in the wilds; a hard case, seen but once a year and that was too often. Curzon expressed a desire to meet him. With misgivings the introduction was made, and, tinged with Viceregal petrifying pedantry, the talk started with an amiable inquiry about the number of years Stewart had been a 'plantah' in Assam. Stewart told him.

"Dear me! Why you must have been an experienced plantah when I was but a child in the nursery!"

"Well," was the reply, "judging by the look of you I should bloody well think I was!"

Not knowing the viceregal equivalent of 'Holy Smoke!' it cannot be put down what the retort to that was, but onlookers said Curzon thought so hard that his face became transparent, while Stewart, scornfully inspecting the planters

in their Sunday clothes told them more than exactly what they looked like. As they lived all the year round in shirt and shorts, if they didn't agree with him, they probably felt like it.

Curzon's valet was his 'double'. When His Excellency ordered a suit of clothes at Ranken's the valet had one like it. On long railway journeys Curzon would be reading or dozing while his valet stood at the carriage door and bowed to the cheering crowd assembled there by order of the local bigbug. Curzon boasted of the time he saved and was proud of his good fortune, pride which might have been whittled down had he known that his 'double' used to go down the 'rag' as the Governor-General of India.

In the days when schoolmasters taught their pupils natural history by taking them round bird-nesting, it was usual for people to carve or write their names on anything from the Pyramids to a seat in a latrine. Bill Smith (travelling incog.) with his friends, did their best to deface every place they visited.

Lady Ravensdale, daughter of Lord Curzon, relates: "I was shewn on one of the window-sills of Darius's palace at Persepolis the badly scratched signature of G. N. Curzon, 1889. By no possible conception could I believe that my father committed such an outrage, although he is in distinguished company. On the two immense blocks of masonry with the carved bulls at the Porch of Xerxes are the names of many illustrious historians and explorers.

For a time Curzon gloried in that practice, as he thought it did the wreck of an old building.

no harm, while it often aroused interest in travellers to find the names of celebrities who had been there before them. But even he could change his mind. Some years after 1899 he refused to permit the architect who had made some small repairs to the Taj Mahal to leave his mark on any prominent part of the building.

In the height of his glory what would he have thought of the man who wrote:—

“Whene’er I see a man’s name  
Scratched upon a glass,  
I know he owns a diamond  
And his father owns an ass.”

Curzon had brains, honesty, industry, patriotism but his two defects—his tongue, and an undue partiality for the ninth letter of the alphabet aroused criticism, often resentment. Like many others he thought he could placate Indians by humiliating senior Government servants and when that fell flat he turned the other way making enemies on both sides. There is no denying his gifts but no one thought more of them than he did. When Minto was appointed Viceroy of India Curzon was filled with dismay. On the arrival of the Mintos at Bombay they were dolled up for the usual great ceremony but Curzon had dismissed the Guard of Honour and band, receiving them in a sports coat and slippers which, unofficially was about as much as Minto, intellectually, was entitled to. He was said to be bright from the feet downwards.

Unable to pass into the Army at a time when, (if a member of the nobility) an essay beginning with a full stop and ending with the word ‘and’

got him through, Minto, until past fifty, admittedly spent his life among grooms and stable boys. His ignorance was free from any blemish of learning which led the *Indian Daily News* to give him an unsolicited testimonial—"It is difficult to say which contains the least—a lady's chit, a subaltern's bungalow, or a viceregal cranium."

Some competent official apparently got a grip of him regarding his duties, which accounts much for the Minto-Morley Reforms—for Minto himself was said to be incapable of understanding simple papers put before him for signature. That guide must have been absent when, on March 19, 1907, Minto reported to Morley that he was settling the Hindu-Moslem differences. "It was simply marvellous," he wrote, "with the troubles and anxieties of a few months ago still fresh in one's memory, to see the 'King of Bengal' (Surendranath Banerjee) sitting on my sofa with his Mahommedan opponents, asking for my assistance to moderate the evil passions of the Bengali, and inveighing against the extravagancies of Bepin Chandra Paul." "I hope you will forgive me a little feeling of exultation at the confidence expressed in me by these representatives of hostile camps, and their declaration of faith in you, Mr. Hare and myself. I was tempted to gush a note of triumph to you at once." (And you should have seen poor Bepin, or heard him when he babbled about 'bending the British lion.' H. H.) What that conference needed was Simple Simon armed with an inflated bladder tied to the end of a stick. As Bepin might have put it—"We are only pulling your legs about!"

Morley, Secretary of State was apparently a great thinker who thought wrong, and a poor judge of character. When Minto, in 1909, as clear-minded as a mule, proposed to establish martial law in India, Morley saw light and wrote —“Your mention of martial law in your last letter makes my hair stand on end.”

In other matters Minto was cocksure but unpleasant. He closed Barrackpore Park against golfers, and posted sentries to keep them out. It was said that he turned the putting greens into jumps for his horses. There was a great outcry and Minto, badly snubbed, had to give way. He tried a similar piece of autocracy in Simla. Sir Edward Buck, in *Simla Past and Present* says, “It was in the summer of 1910 that Lord Minto being sadly misled (by himself).....attempted to close the public road through the (Mashobra) Retreat forest, and so began what became known as the “Mashobra Right of Way Case.” He lost it and scored another snub, of which he had so many during his five years as Viceroy all thoroughly well deserved. The sinister side of all that being that he was on the eve of retirement when he set out to deprive Simla people of pleasant resort.

For the usual Viceregal memorial, Minto's collection was £9,400 which was said to be the largest amount ever subscribed for that purpose. One wonders if the procedure was adopted of giving orders in the Curzonian spirit. For the Victoria Memorial nobody was allowed to give more than a lakh of rupees. (Some were said to have been warned not to give less.) With so



large a sum the Mintos decided to have their portraits painted by Lazlo, (2,500 guineas each?) which left so little for the equestrian crow-perch that Minto, a great horseman and a rider in the Grand National, can now be seen on the Calcutta Maidan perched on a school boy's half-starved pony.

To have appointed such a man to so high a post was on a par with making a blind cripple centre-forward of a hockey team.

Considering how hard verse can hit it is astonishing how little use is made of it. In 1913, while superintending a revolver match in Fort William, I slipped and broke my leg. At the time I was insured in the Army & Navy Accident Insurance Company which Company must have been hit so hard by the number of officers who met with accidents in 1914-1918 that it went out business.

I claimed £63. That was £6 a week for total and £1 10 per week for partial disablement. The Company offered £40 which I refused to accept. During the year I went Home and letters led to an R.A.M.C. Major coming to Bournemouth who certified that my claim was moderate. Even then nothing transpired. So I wrote to the Company four lines which I set to the tune of "The Blue Bells of Scotland."

"The Army, and Navy, Insurance Company;  
To get a claim adjusted, how hard it seems to be.  
I broke my bally leg whilst a-serving of the King,  
But to get what I'm entitled to seems a diff'rent  
sort of thing."

Yours faithfully.

Back came an order for £63 and a letter stating that it was the first claim they had set to music and if I was in the neighbourhood of Picadilly would I have lunch with the directors.

Another letter to the tune of 'Home, Sweet Home' sent to an American firm insulting them for taking nine months to attend to my order drew a letter which ran; 'A man like you ought to be in the bright and breezy West, not in the worn out and effete East. We are sending for your acceptance an umbrella with a silver mount and an inscription.' It was a very good umbrella, the best I ever owned and we were friends ever after.

Before the 1914-18 war the Calcutta Agent of the Deutsch-Asiatische Bank was Otto Christ. The cable address of the Mercantile Bank of India London office was "Paradise."

Some comment was aroused when "O. Christ" remitted £10,000 to "Paradise."

These rambling notes have only an occasional personal touch but I have hopes of writing on my political and business experiences. In politics I have stood up for my country and for more than forty years attacked the disloyalty of my countrymen, constantly pointing out that prestige cannot be sustained on dishonesty. If I have been wrong I have been consistent; what's more I've never been tackled. When it was proposed to present to one of our Judas Knights of the 'Golden Fleece with a piece of plate (in appreciation of his disloyalty) I recommended that it should cost no more than the usual sum—Thirty

Pieces of Silver. Greater than untold gold is the ability to speak one's mind. Bismarck is credited with saying, "Speech is silver, silence is golden, but to say one thing and mean another is Britannia metal. Politically, the Briton in India is not only off the gold standard but also off Britannia metal. They go to political meetings in small numbers and dignify themselves by looking at spouters of twaddle like a calf looks at a butcher. There are signs that this is changing, and about time too!

The Press, less than a third in number of daily papers, is less in size and less willing to risk expressing opinions. In that there is wisdom as the hostility to everything British is so wide and deep that money can always be found to launch and maintain an attack without an aggrieved individual Indian spending an anna. We have outstayed our welcome and more than a large number of Indian politicians don't care two damns if their daughters are violated or their grandchildren brained; they are determined to get rid of us. As we spend more in a fortnight on the war than we get out of India in a year we might as well pack in. There are more Indian doctors, dentists, accountants and solicitors practising in England than there are British practising in India. They will lower the standard of living and might as well be kept out. England can do without them far better than Indians can do without the British.

There have been incidents in India which the English ought to forget, but there are many more they should be proud to remember. Unlike

Gandhi, I do not consider the charcoal brazier better than the blast furnace, nor do I think the string-and-stick hard ship superior to the modern liner. I don't believe either that 'Non-Violence' means peace, because I know it gives Gandhi's brassbound-sticks-in-waiting a chance to riot, murder and rob, and he knows that too. It is something to have lived long enough to understand and appreciate many of the trials and troubles of the people around you, and to feel that they have grown to know and to like you. Everybody may not look so complacently to the future, nor contemplate the past with such satisfaction that a second helping is neither hoped for nor desired. For me, once is enough. The world has only been worth living in during the past forty years.

"For olden times let others prate;  
I deem it lucky I was born so late."



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